

# HdO

Early Buddhist Art  
of China & Central Asia  
*Volume Three*  
Marylin Martin Rhie



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Volume Three



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# Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia

## Volume Three

The Western Ch'in in Kansu in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period  
and Inter-relationships with the Buddhist Art  
of Gandhāra

*By*

Marylin Martin Rhie



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Cover photo: Niche with Amitāyus triad, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, dated 424 A.D. (after: *Heirinji sekkutsu*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986)

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*In memory of*

Prof. Harrie Vanderstappen

*and*

Prof. Erik Zürcher



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## PREFACE

A preface to the third volume of Marylin Martin Rhie's monumental history of early Chinese Buddhist art might strike some as tardy and superfluous. Erik Zürcher (1928-2008), the modern master of the field of early Chinese Buddhism, already contributed the opening words to the first volume (1999), which covered the Later Han, Three Kingdoms, and Western Jin periods. The second volume of the series (2002) proceeded to the Eastern Jin (in the south of China) and Buddhist art in the north through the year 439. This third volume shifts the focus to the period of the Western Qin in Gansu. But beyond the change in historical and geographical concentration, this third volume deals with new subjects and brings to bear perspectives that differ significantly from those of the earlier volumes. Hence, a brief benediction at the start may not be out of place.

The Western Qin kingdom (385-431), which history books usually subsume under the Sixteen Kingdoms of north China in the fourth and fifth centuries, was centered in the area of modern Lanzhou in eastern Gansu and occupied a position of prime importance in the history of Buddhism. The artistic and religious models produced there are nothing short of magnificent. While an ethnically-Han regime ruled in the southeast, this part of the Hexi corridor was ruled by the Qifu clan, a Xianbei group who partly followed Sinitic models. Under the Western Qin the area underwent a renaissance of artistic production, especially visible at the complexes of cave-temples at Binglingsi and Maijishan. Here we find the first monumental Buddha statue known to survive in the Middle Kingdom, as well as early examples of motifs and iconographies that would later become central to Chinese Buddhism, including the Buddhas of the ten-directions, groups of five Buddhas, the thousand-Buddha motif, the deities of pure land Buddhism, the Buddha of healing (Bhaiṣajyaguru), and the Buddha of the future (Maitreya).

As in her earlier work, in this volume Professor Rhie offers the reader an unprecedented vision of how stylistic similarities in the three-dimensional modeling of drapery and other elements of Buddhist statuary cohere across vast stretches of time and space. Combining the appreciation of aesthetic detail and an encyclopedic knowledge of artistic expression that spans Eastern and Western Asia, the author argues, where appropriate, for the flow of influence. From her unrivalled perspective, eastern Gansu in this fifty-year period mediates between Chinese influences from southeast China and Central Asian and Indian influences from the west. Her account engages virtually every relevant element of visual and artistic analysis, including the style and construction of statuary and garment, bodily poses, color, iconographic arrangement and identification, and architectural design.

For the study of Buddhist art of the earlier period, the relative paucity of other forms of evidence makes this method of stylistic analysis the best (and essentially the only) resort. For the time and place under discussion in this volume, however, textual sources are relatively numerous, and the author has not been afraid to delve deeply into them. Her forays into the study of Buddhist scripture and historical records are expert, constituting a springboard not only for new interpretations but for a new approach to her material. For anyone interested in the art and mythology of the *Lotus Sūtra*, various pure land sūtras, or the *Flower Garland (Huayan) Sūtra*, the analysis offered in this book opens up new avenues of research. Combining mature and astute visual analysis with close readings and new interpretations of the texts, this volume of Professor Rhie's work is a model for future scholarship.

Stephen F. Teiser



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my series of books with Brill, this volume is the first work focusing on the early Buddhist art from the Kansu region of northwest China. It has taken some years to go into this very complicated yet extremely important area, which will be continued in Volume IV. The prolific remains of Buddhist art from this region during the Sixteen Kingdoms period (317-439 A.D.) bring special relevance not only to the art of China, but also that of Central Asia and Gandhāra, and indeed impact the realm of Buddhism and the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese during this active, foundational time for Buddhism in China.

Many have been helpful along the way in this endeavor to uncover some of the underlying issues, causes and sources of what we can still see on the ground in Kansu, and I am immensely grateful to all my teachers, including Prof. Pramod Chandra, Prof. Herlee Creel and Prof. Edmund Kracke, and for all the support and advice of scholars and friends, particularly from Prof. John Rosenfield, over the years. I received invaluable assistance regarding some of the hard areas of the translations presented in this book, most especially from Prof. Paul Harrison and Dr. Jan Nattier concerning the early Chinese translations of Buddhist texts relating to Amitābha, and from Myeong Beop Sunim of the Unmunsa temple in Korea for reading over and resolving some passages in several sutra translations. Prof. Maria Heim and Prof. Andy Rotman were very helpful with issues regarding the Pali materials. My appreciation also goes to Prof. Jamie Hubbard and Prof. Peter Gregory for their collegial assistance, as well as to the speakers and members of the Five College Buddhist Seminar, from whom I gained much useful knowledge during the many interesting and insightful discussions over the past four or five years. I continue to utilize the translations of some historical texts which were assisted by Prof. Xuan Hu, Prof. Changchi Hao and also by Dr. Yang Wei when she was at Smith College. I am particularly thankful to Dr. Kurt Behrendt for generously sharing some of his photographs of Stupa A15 at Jauliān in Gandhāra, as well as some of his field notes on other stupas at that site. Further, I fondly remember the conversations I had with several Chinese scholars, particularly Teng Yü-hsiang and Chang Pao-hsi at the Research Institute in Lan chow. Smith College provided support for defraying some photographic expenses, and I am particularly thankful to Dick Fish, who has patiently and expertly produced the majority of my many photographs, and now scans, for publication. Also, Stacey Finkelstein of the Smith College photo staff has generously prepared some prints for this book. My appreciation goes to Susie Bourque, Smith College Provost during the years I was writing this book, and to Prof. John Davis and Prof. Barbara Kellum, who served as consecutive chair persons of the Art Department during that time, for their understanding and support for my work and for allowing me to take several necessary leaves which were crucial to completing this volume.

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Finally, this book is dedicated to the memory of two professors who passed away while this volume was being written, and who both were so influential in the underlying causes for this work: Prof. Harrie Vanderstappen, my teacher of East Asian art and ever-interested enthusiast concerning my work on Chinese Buddhist art, and Prof. Erik Zürcher, the famous scholar of early Chinese Buddhism, who saw the value in my work, supported the project for publication with Brill, and who, in his last message to me again expressed his most uplifting encouragement for my work. I hope this book lives up to both their expectations, though this would certainly be a very tall order.

Wilbraham, Massachusetts  
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### *Note Regarding Diacriticals*

Diacriticals are used here for Sanskrit, Korean and Japanese words. However, an exception is made for the words “stupa” and “sutra” (both of which are now commonly listed in English dictionaries without the diacriticals) when they do not occur as part of a Sanskrit name or title, such as Sāñcī Stūpa or *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.





## INTRODUCTION

The region now known as Kansu 甘肅 province was an enormously consequential area in the developments of Buddhism and Buddhist art in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (317-439 A.D.) in China. However, because of its relative inaccessibility until recently, very little was actually known or made available for study of its Buddhist art until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chinese scholars then began to investigate the remains of the ancient cave temple sites in that region, which were even at that time very difficult to reach, with some exceptions, such as the famous Tun-huang 燉煌 at the far western reaches of Kansu. With the “rediscovery” of Ping-ling ssu 炳靈寺, Mai-chi shan 麥積山, T'ien-t'i shan 天梯山, Ma-t'i ssu 馬蹄寺, Wen-shu shan 文殊山, Ch'ang-ma 昌馬 and other sites, a whole new world opened up for early Buddhist art in China.

The initial work of investigation and preliminary reports was undertaken largely by the research and preservation bureaus of local areas within Kansu, and so a body of materials comprising original sculptures and remains of many wall paintings became available, many in an astonishing state of preservation. These reports revealed an incredibly rich storehouse from the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms (and later) that is still offering us important glimpses, previously thought unattainable, for the time around the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century. These remains fill an otherwise slim reservoir of art remains from other major regions of China at this time, prior to the more well-documented period of the Northern Wei 北魏 in North China from 439 A.D. Thus a wider window on the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century has been provided by the miraculous survival of art from the Kansu region.

Volume I of this series studied the early Buddhist art of the Later Han (20-220 A.D.), Three Kingdoms (220-265 A.D.) and Western Chin 西晉 (265/285-317 A.D.) periods in China along with the art of the corresponding time in Western Central Asia and the Southern Silk Road kingdoms, especially that of the kingdom of Shan-shan 鄯善. Volume II focused on the Eastern Chin 東晉 period (317-420) in South China and the Sixteen Kingdoms (317-439) in the North, as well as the major sites on the Northern Silk Road, with the exception of Turfan, which will appear in a later volume of this series. The current volume is the first of several that takes us to Kansu province in the Northwest of China during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, and it especially focuses on the art, Buddhism and history of the Western Ch'in 西秦 (385-431) kingdom in eastern Kansu.

The Western Ch'in, though not a major state at the time, contributed substantially in the area of early Buddhist art. The kingdom rose from the ruins of Fu Chien's 苻堅 Former Ch'in 前秦 (351-385/394), which collapsed after the infamous and disastrous battle at the Fei River (Fei Shui 淝水) in the autumn of 383. Despite Western Ch'in's constant struggle against the stronger Later Ch'in 後秦 (386-418) centered in the Ch'ang-an 長安 area under the Yao 姚 clan, and the ambitious and aggressive Northern Liang 北涼 (397-439) in central Kansu under Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜 (401-433), the first three Western Ch'in rulers were able to gradually expand and solidify their territory, which reached its maximum strength and prosperity during the reign of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an 乞伏熾磐 (412-428). Soon thereafter, however, the kingdom collapsed in 431. Nevertheless, even during the forty-six years of its existence, the Western Ch'in offers such consequential remains of Buddhist art, especially from the site of Ping-ling ssu, that its impact reaches not only to the understanding of the art of other sites in Kansu, but has significant implications for the rest of China, and even for the Buddhist

art of Central Asia and Gandhāra. Because of these factors, this volume concentrates primarily on this site and its early major remains in Cave 169.

The art that survives from the territory under the Western Ch'in emerges as a crucial component in understanding the late years of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the early years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, a particularly difficult but consequential and formative period for Buddhism and Buddhist art in China. The existing remains at the sites of Ping-ling ssu 炳靈寺 and Mai-chi shan 麥積山 provide a crucial foundational template against which to measure the dating, chronology and iconography of the art from other Buddhist sites of Kansu that will be undertaken in subsequent volumes of this series. Ping-ling ssu in particular provides the materials to formulate a detailed chronology of the Buddhist art of the Kansu region and becomes a major factor in unlocking some of the iconographic issues of this time. Mai-chi shan, though less prolific at this time, has such splendid early images that it holds a special place, and at the same time is a prime source in determining the chain of early 5<sup>th</sup> century developments of the Chinese artistic idiom in Buddhist art, one of the major issues of this book.

To more fully understand the period and to introduce the art in the region of eastern Kansu, the political history of the Western Ch'in and its geographic importance are addressed in Chapter 1, using mostly primary historical sources, notably, the *Chin shu* 晉書. Though recognizing that these histories by no means present the whole historical picture, that they were compiled at a time much later than the events themselves, and that they may also have an "official" underpinning, these dynastic histories nevertheless provide essential data among an otherwise scant written record available today. Thus pertinent passages regarding the history of the Western Ch'in have been translated here as an attempt to at least offer a framework for understanding some historical aspects of the time and place. In Chapter 1 the excerpts are not presented in exact literal translation, but the passages are closely summarized from a complete translation in order to more specifically grasp the history of the Western Ch'in than is currently possible from western sources, and more exact translations occur in the accompanying footnotes. Also, records pertaining to the Buddhism under the Western Ch'in are translated, including several biographies of famous Buddhist monks from the *Kao-seng chuan* 高僧傳. This brings into play the importance of the communication routes, a factor that will concern us throughout this volume, especially when investigating the sources of the art in India, Gandhāra, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

Chapter 2 studies the rare, nearly perfect, gilt bronze Buddha altar found at Ching-ch'uan 涇川 in eastern Kansu, not far from Ch'ang-an. The specifics of its find and likely history are discussed, and its dating and relevance is assessed within the chronology of the bronze Buddha images presented in Volume II of this series. The images studied in this chapter serve an important reference throughout the book in helping to determine the dating of other images and also in formulating a chronology of the time.

This is followed by a concentrated study of the earliest remains from the cave temple site of Ping-ling ssu, the spectacular mountainous site on the Yellow River and not far from one of the capitals (Fu-han 枹罕) of the Western Ch'in. Chapter 3 focuses on the large clay standing Buddha of Niche No.1, not only the oldest remains at Ping-ling ssu, but the only known early surviving example of a monumental Buddha image in China from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapters 4 through 7 examine the art of the Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, which spans the entire period of the Western Ch'in from ca. 380's-430's in a practically unbroken chronological chain. The results become vital in establishing the foundation for a chronology of art of that time in Kansu and in other areas. Cave 169 is closely examined utilizing the pioneer studies of Chinese scholars, particularly those of Teng Yü-hsiang 董玉祥 and Chang Pao-hsi 張寶璽, but with emphasis placed here on unraveling

the specific dating, chronology, iconographies as well as the iconographic programs of the art more than has been done so far. These chapters start with the West Wall (back wall) and move sequentially to the East Wall (entrance), South and North Walls. Each chapter presents new results concerning the art and offers some new theories concerning the identification of the images. Various sutra translations into Chinese prior to ca. 425 A.D. are fruitfully used, a source which has not yet been brought to bear with sufficient vigor on the problems of identification of imagery for this time. These yielded important evidences, including some significant representations apparently specifically related to the early translation of the *Lotus Sutra* by Dharmarakṣa in 286 A.D., prior to the 406 A.D. translation by Kumārajīva, and with regard to the Amitāyus triad niche of Group 6 with its rare inscriptions containing the date of make and the names of the images and donors.

Not only is the Group 6 triad of seated Buddha and two Bodhisattvas the oldest surviving representation in China of Amitāyus and the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvati, the Buddha land of Amitāyus, as described in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經, but also this niche has the inscribed ten direction Buddhas from the *Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經. It is clear that the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra (completed in 420; revision and collation completed in 422) in Chien-k'ang 建康 in the South was known to the makers and donors of the Group 6 ensemble, which is the earliest surviving representation in art from this sutra presently known in China. Since it is the religious experts (i.e., the knowledgeable monks) who in large part probably govern the iconographic accuracy and choices in much of the major art at this time in order to assure the proper representation of the religious system and its meaning, it is likely that the major Buddhist masters, such as T'an-ma-pi 曇摩毘 and Tao-jung 道融, two of the monk donors (one foreign and one Chinese) of this niche, were involved in the particular choices and design of the Group 6 images. For some reason, possibly because of some linkage by either or both of these masters, or by the other monks and donors, the *Hua-yen ching* of the Buddhahadra translation was taken as one of the major textual sources, although it would appear to be secondary in this case to the major text, which clearly appears to have been the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, currently believed by a number of scholars to have been translated by Buddhahadra together with Pao-yün 寶雲 in Chien-k'ang and put out in 421 A.D. The close interaction between the texts translated by Buddhahadra in the South in conjunction with the evidences in the Group 6 niche regarding dates and donors are carefully examined and are shown to be of such importance that light can be shed on some of the major problems regarding the dating and attributions of the texts. The study of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* presented in Chapters 6 and 7, taking into account the work of Japanese scholars such as Fujita Kōtatsu in relation to the Group 6 materials, offers new and pertinent evidences regarding the resolution of certain problems surrounding that text. The close interaction between text and art is, in this case, a particularly unusual intersection of fortuitous circumstances and puts a truly high premium on the rare images of the Group 6 niche, its sculptures, paintings and inscriptions. Furthermore, Group 6 relates to the difficult problem of the appearance of Amitābha/Amitāyus in the art of India and Gandhāra. At the end of Chapter 6 these issues are discussed and a possible example of the Sukhāvati Buddha land of Amitāyus in Gandhāran sculpture is offered and analyzed. This begins the impetus to study in this and the forthcoming volumes the relation between the early Chinese Buddhist art and that of the Gandhāra and Afghanistan regions, very likely the "Ch-pin" 罽賓 of this time in Chinese records.

In this direction, the art of Cave 169 also shows four cases of a grouping of five Buddhas, an iconography which has not received enough attention heretofore and which is considered very significantly here. Realizing the importance of Cave 169 for the study of the five Buddha iconography, in Chapter 8

a preliminary investigation of sets of five Buddha configurations in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan is undertaken with notable results that not only explain the four different cases appearing in Cave 169, but also uncover the probable development of the iconography of the five Buddhas in general, as well as other sets of multiple Buddhas, from the Gandhāran region. It is my hope that this study even opens up more possibilities for understanding the complex and vital developments in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan.

Attention is also briefly turned in Chapter 8 to one of the greatest expressions of five Buddhas in the five colossal T'an-yao 曇曜 caves at the imperial Northern Wei 北魏 caves of Yün-kang 雲崗 in north-eastern China around the 460's–480's. The findings from the study of Gandhāran and Afghanistan art and iconography in conjunction with the rare and amazingly important remains from Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu allow for a new consideration of the identity of the primary colossal images of the five T'an-yao caves, one of the most extraordinary productions in all Buddhist art. The ramifications are wide and important, and they are related to the remains in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu in Kansu, which provides the evidence and the dating that allow such an investigation to bear fruit. Both the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 study and the theory presented regarding the five T'an-yao caves offer, in my view, major contributions to the on-going study of the appearance of the Mahāyāna in Buddhist art, in all its forms, a factor which fundamentally underlies much of the study in this series. The early Buddhist art of China, I believe, has the potentially crucial materials for understanding and possibly revealing, in a "reverse" role, many of the developments and evolution of art and ideas taking place in India, Gandhāra, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Finally, in Chapter 9, the book returns to Kansu and the site of Mai-chi shan for a few caves from this early period, at the site of Hsüan-kao's 玄高 meditation activities during the period when the Western Ch'in occupied this territory (around 417-428). The remains of large, stunningly beautiful stucco images are seen to draw inspiration from the Gandhāran art we studied in Chapter 8, and to probably have echoes from the art of China from Ch'ang-an, a factor which compliments the finding of the resonances of the art from Group 6 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu with art and texts from South China. The establishment of an early dating for Cave 78 and 74 is of consequence, as is the introduction of theories of identification for the images of these two major caves and for the Maitreya image of Cave 169 at Mai-chi shan. Both Ping-ling ssu and Mai-chi shan are critical references for charting the developments of early Mahāyāna Buddhist art of this time in the broader context of India and Central Asia and in regard to the particular Chinese responses and contributions.

As in the other volumes, importance is given to translation of records and texts from the Chinese and to a detailed, object-oriented analysis that not only seeks to document the art, but also leads to understanding of the artistic styles that can indicate the chronological sequences of the art, and ultimately allows for comprehension of the relationships and interactions among the art from other regions of China, from Central Asia, Gandhāra, Afghanistan and India. In exploring these connections from a standpoint centered in China, which frequently offers resources in terms of records, dates, historical data, and translations of texts which are not readily available outside of China, as well as the remains of imagery, remarkable evidences have appeared that impact the wider world of Buddhist art during the formative 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century. This approach is pervasive in all the volumes of this series which seek, while explicating the Buddhist art and its roots in Buddhism and Chinese history, to open up the potential inhering in the vast reserves of Chinese art and culture for realization of the inter-relationships with the other Buddhist regions of Asia.

I have had the good fortune to have been able to visit many Buddhist sites in Asia over the years. From my first visits from 1965–1975 to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, parts of Central Asia, Korea and Japan I was amazed to see many connections between their Buddhist art and that of China, my main research focus. When China finally opened during the 1980's and 1990's my numerous visits to the Buddhist sites of northern and northwestern China continued to reaffirm—first-hand and in instance after instance—my early initial awareness of the clear relatedness between the Buddhist art of India and that of China, through which there was also a continuing impact on the Buddhist art of Korea and Japan during all the major periods of their Buddhist art. It became my concerted work to document these connections in the art and to work out a method of utilizing these connections to help inform and even resolve major issues of dating, chronologies and iconography in the Buddhist art of China in particular, and, in some cases, even with those of the other Buddhist countries.

Results have been forthcoming, and I now consider this approach to be one important method to understanding not only the broad issues, but also pointedly specific ones. This approach, of course, does not obviate the necessity for individually focused studies on other issues, such as of patronage, local societal and economic factors, reconstruction and interpretation, but such an approach offers a place for including all such specific studies within the purview of the greater whole and vast world of inter-relationships. I can note that in all my work I am aware of lacunae in the treatment of history and in the usage of Buddhist texts, but I have attempted to provide what I judge to be sufficient in the context of Buddhist art history. In this volume I have been gratified by the new evidences that the Group 6 Amitāyus niche in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu has been able to offer towards certain problems concerning the translation dates of some important Buddhist sutras in China. For early Buddhist art in China the approach noted above, which I call a comprehensive method, has in fact opened up a new awareness of issues, and presents perhaps unexpectedly important factors to emerge onto the stage for further investigation, such as the study of the five-Buddha iconography in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, Gandhāra, and in the great T'an-yao caves of the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century in northeast China and its consequences in later periods, some of which will be further developed in the subsequent volumes of this series.

As I close this introduction, a few things come to mind. Obviously, some of the ideas I present in this volume are my theories, though they are the results of long and hard thought. I expect the legitimacy of those assertions and suggestions will bear out when more evidences are available in the future. At any rate, all assertions or theories should be carefully presented with credible justifications. In the study of art history I can say that hardly anything is not speculative or not imperfect, particularly to those who do not allow any speculative possibilities. In spite of this, it is incumbent on us to offer, conjecture, and predict the possibilities and feasibilities for the advancement of the field. In research work of any kind, we have to peel off the unknowns bit by bit and advance step by step to establish theories utilizing available, pertinent, yet examined, evidences and data. Normally, we have to start with a method which works best for a given task, and then, if possible, other methods should be applied to obtain further results. All the results from different approaches should be carefully examined to see if there are any discrepancies. If there are, obviously more research is required.

In my work concerning Buddhist art, it is crucial, even for obtaining new ideas, to have wide and deep knowledge of the art (particularly of the art objects themselves), Buddhism, and the cultural history of the time throughout the Buddhist world of Asia. Also, I would like to emphasize that the results of Buddhist art historical research can be greatly enhanced, properly understood, and deeply appreciated by knowing the essential basics, such as chronology and iconography. In other words, without

sufficient knowledge of these basics there is always room for making errors or incorrect assessments. To the younger scholars, I would like to say that no matter what areas of art history you engage in—textual study, interpretive work, or object-oriented visual and technical analysis, or any combination of these or others—the essential matter is that your work should be “good”, credible, and as accurate as possible. After all, that is important in the end. So here again, as in the other volumes, I will leave several interesting problems in the conclusion that you might like to ponder in the future.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE WESTERN CH'IN (385-431 A.D.): HISTORY AND BUDDHISM

#### SUMMARY DATA: WESTERN CH'IN

Kingdom: *Western Ch'in* 西秦 (385-431)

capitals from 385-412:

**Chin ch'eng** 金城 (present day *Lan chou* 蘭州), then **Yüan ch'uan** 苑川, then **Yung-shih ch'eng** 勇士城

capital from 412-431:

**Fu-han** 枹罕, also known as **Ho-chou** 河州 (present day *Lin-hsia* 臨夏). See Fig. 1.1.

Ruling House: Ch'i-fu 乞伏

Ethnicity: Hsien-pi 鮮卑

Rulers and their *nien-hao* 年號

**Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen** 乞伏國仁 (r. 385-388)

Chien-i 建義 (385-387)

**Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei** 乞伏乾歸 (r. 388-412)

T'ai-ch'u 太初 (388-406)

I-hsi 義熙 (407-408)

Kang-shih 更始 (409-411)

**Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an** 乞伏熾磐 (r. 412-428)

Yung-k'ang 永康 (412-419)

Chien-hung 建弘 (420-427)

**Ch'i-fu Mu-mo** 乞伏暮末 (r. 427-431)

Yung-hung 永弘 (427-431)



## I. THE CH'I-FU CLAN AND THE WESTERN CH'IN (385-431 A.D.)

The kingdom known as the Western Ch'in was ruled by leaders of the Ch'i-fu clan in the region of eastern and southern Kansu. It was centered until 412 around the locale of Chin ch'eng 金城 (Lan chou 蘭州), and after 412 at Fu-han 枹罕 (Ho chou 河州, present Lin-hsia 臨夏). At the height of the kingdom, which came during the reign of Chih-p'an 熾磐 (412-428), the Ch'i-fu controlled a large area from Lung-hsi 隴西 in the east to Hsi-p'ing 西平 in the west and from Yüan-ch'uan 苑川 in the north into the vast areas of nomad territory south of Fu-han (Fig. 1.1).

## A. Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen (r. 385-387/388): Beginning of the Western Ch'in Kingdom

According to the *Chin shu* 晉書, the Ch'ih-fu clan was formerly the Ju-fu-ssu [yin] 如弗斯[引], one of the three groups of the Hsien-pi 鮮卑 in the Outer Mongolian region. In the Han period this clan moved south to the Ta-yin shan 大陰山 area in the Ordos (Fig. 1.1).<sup>1</sup> Later, during the T'ai-shih 泰始 era (265-274) of the Western Chin 西晉, Ch'i-fu Yu-lin 乞伏祐鄰 moved the group of 5,000 families into the area of eastern Kansu near the border with Ning Hsia and settled at Kao-p'ing ch'uan 高平川 in the An-ting 安定 area (Fig. 1.1). After various successive leaders and the acquiring of more territory, Ch'i-fu Shu-yen 乞伏述延 became the leader.<sup>2</sup> He attacked another Hsien-pi group called the Mo-hou 莫侯, who were at Yüan ch'uan 苑川<sup>3</sup> and defeated it, thus gaining 20,000 some villages. He settled his tribe there and entrusted the governing affairs to his uncle. Around the time Shih Lo 石勒 destroyed Former Chao's 前趙 Liu Yao 劉曜 (i.e., 328 A.D.), Shu-yen died and his son, Nü-ta-han 僊大寒 was established as leader. Fearful of the situation, Nü-ta-han moved to Mai-t'ien's 麥田 Wu-ku shan 无孤山 (Chien shan 堅山 near Lan chou). After Nü-ta-han died, his son Ssu-fan [p'an] 司繁 became leader and moved to Tu-chien shan 度堅山. When attacked by Fu Chien's 苻堅 (Former Ch'in 前秦)

<sup>1</sup> The legend of the origin of the Ch'i-fu leaders comes from the period of this migration. According to the *Chin shu*, during this migration, the group encountered a huge reptile creature blocking their passage. It looked like a great tumulus or large "spirit turtle." After giving rites to this creature, it disappeared and a young boy was found. He was adopted and later, because of his heroism, was made leader of the tribe. His name was Ch'i-fu K'o-han 乞伏可汗 and he is credited as the ancestor of the clan.

"...Originally, there were three groups (pu 步) [of the Hsien-pi], consisting of the Ju-fu-ssu, the Ch'ü-lien 出連 and the Ch'ih-lu 叱廬. From north of the desert they went south to Ta-yin shan 大陰山. They met a large reptile on the road. Its form was like a mysterious (godly) turtle. It was big like a tumulus, so they killed a horse and paid the rites, blessing it, saying, "If you are a good spirit, then open the passage. If you are a bad spirit, then close it and we will not be able to pass." Suddenly it disappeared. Then there was one child there. At that time the Ch'i-fu clan had an old man who was childless. He asked to adopt the boy as his son. Everyone assented and allowed him to do that. So the old man was happy and he had someone to depend on. His name (tzu) was Ho-kan 紇干, which in Hsia 夏 speech means to lean on and depend on. At age 10 he was very brave and good at shooting from a horse. He could pull a bow with the strength of 500 chin. The four sections subjugated themselves and followed his military heroism; they put him up as a leader and called him Ch'i-fu K'o-han 乞伏可汗 and T'o-to 託鐸 Mo-hou. As for T'o-to, it means neither god nor man." Fang Hsüan-ling (T'ang), *Chin shu*, 10 vols., Peking: Chung-hua shu ch'ü ch'u-pan, 1974, chüan 125, p. 3113.

<sup>2</sup> When Yu-lin died, his son Chieh-ch'üan 結權 was established and the tribe moved to Ch'ien-t'un 牽屯. After Chieh-ch'üan died his son Li-na 利那 succeeded. He attacked the Hsien-pi T'u-lai 鮮卑吐賴 at Wu-shu shan 烏樹山 and attacked Wei-ch'ih K'o-ch'ün 尉遲渴權 at Ta-fei ch'uan 大非川 and gained 30,000 some villages. When Li-na died, his brother Chien-nu 祁埜 was established. When he died, Li-na's son Shu-yen 述延 was established. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3114. Okazaki, Fumio, *Gi-Shin namboku-chō tsūshi* (History of the Wei-Chin and Southern and Northern Dynasties), Tokyo, 1943, pp. 205-206.

<sup>3</sup> Yüan ch'uan is also called Tzu-ch'eng ch'uan 子城川 after a small tributary on the Yellow River east of Lan chou 蘭州 in Kansu.

general Wang T'ung 王統 in the 370's, many of the Ch'i-fu people rebelled and surrendered. Seeing the futility of fleeing to another area, Ssu-fan went to Wang T'ung and surrendered to Fu Chien 苻堅, who was pleased and brought Ssu-fan to Ch'ang-an (capital of the Former Ch'in 前秦). When the Hsien-pi Po-han 勃寒 invaded Lung-yu 隴右, Fu Chien ordered Ssu-fan to attack. Po-han was frightened and surrendered to Fu Chien. Ch'i-fu Ssu-fan was then stationed at Yung-shih ch'uan 勇士川. When Ssu-fan, who had achieved high fame, died, Kuo-jen was temporarily put in his position.<sup>4</sup>

The clans used by Fu Chien stayed in Yüan ch'uan, and Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen stayed in Ch'ang-an. He accompanied Fu Chien in his southern campaign in A.D. 383. After Fu Chien was defeated at the battle of the river Fei 淝水 (Anhui) in 383, Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen became independent at Yüan ch'uan and established a new city, Yung-shih ch'eng 勇士城, southwest of Yüan ch'uan (Fig. 1.1). Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen, considered the founder of the kingdom of Western Ch'in, died in 388.<sup>5</sup>

#### B. Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei (r. 388-412): Expansion of the Western Ch'in

Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei 乞伏乾歸 established himself in 388 as the self-styled king of Ho-nan 河南王 and returned the capital to Chin ch'eng 金城 (Fig. 1.1).<sup>6</sup> His 24-year rule paralleled the reigns of Yao Ch'ang 姚萇 (r. 386-393) and Yao Hsing 姚興 (r. 393-416) of the Later Ch'in 後秦 (386-418), ruling the region around Ch'ang-an, that is, the kuan-chung 關中 region. During the reign of Yao Hsing, the Later Ch'in controlled the area of Ch'in chou 秦州 and the garrison at Shang-kuei 上邽 (Fig. 1.1), an important point for exercising control over the Lung-yu 隴右 region and one that was often contested and sought after in this period. Towards the end of Yao Hsing's reign, Later Ch'in power was weakening in that area.

Ch'ien-kuei was overall a successful leader, able to acquire and consolidate territory, primarily from various Hsien-pi and Ch'iang 羌 groups in the region. He attacked and defeated the leader (wang 王)

<sup>4</sup> *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3114.

<sup>5</sup> At the time Fu Chien was fighting the battle of Fei Shui (the river Fei) in 383 he ordered Kuo-jen to be the "pilot cavalry." Then Kuo-jen's uncle, Pu-t'ui 步頽 rebelled at Lung-hsi 隴西. Fu Chien sent Kuo-jen to return and attack him. When Pu-t'ui heard of this he rejoiced. He welcomed Kuo-jen on the road and the two celebrated the reunion. After Fu Chien lost at Fei Shui he tried to reassemble his army and re-gather the various ethnic groups, but he was soon killed by Yao-ch'ang 姚萇 of the Ch'iang 羌 (in the spring of 385). Then Kuo-jen declared independence, and in T'ai-yüan 太元 10<sup>th</sup> year (385) he called himself to be leader and formed a government, establishing 12 chüns 郡. He constructed Yung-shih ch'eng 勇士城 and stayed there. Hsien-pi P'i-lan 匹蘭 surrendered. The following year Nan-an's 南安 Pi-i 祕宜 and various Ch'iang 羌 attacked Kuo-jen from all sides. He defeated Pi-i, who retreated back to Nan-an. Later, Pi-i's younger brother led 30,000 families and surrendered to Kuo-jen. Fu Teng 苻登, nominal head of the Later Ch'in after Fu Chien's death in 385, was trying to make a comeback from a base among the Ti 氐 clans in Kansu. He sent an emissary to Kuo-jen offering many titles. Kuo-jen led a cavalry of 30,000 and attacked the Hsien-pi "strong men": Mi-kuei 密貴, Yü-kou 裕苟, T'i-lun 提倫 and others of the three sections (pu) at Liu-ch'üan 六泉. Kuo-p'ing's Hsien-pi Mo I-yü 沒奕于 and Tung-hu's 東胡 Chin-hsi 金熙 brought their soldiers and surrendered. All met at Chieh-hun ch'uan 竭渾川. There was a great battle and they were defeated [by Kuo-jen]. He killed 3,000 and captured 5,000 horses. Mo I-yü and Chin-hsi returned. The three sections (pu) were shocked and frightened. Leading their armies they surrendered to Kuo-jen. Kuo-jen's general Ch'ih-lu 叱盧烏孤跋 rebelled and captured Ch'ien-t'un shan 牽屯山. Kuo-jen led his 7,000-man cavalry and killed Pa's general. One-thousand families surrendered. Pa subsequently surrendered and got back his former position. Kuo-jen attacked and defeated other Hsien-pi and obtained more villages. Kuo-jen died in 388 after 4 years of rule. He was posthumously named Hsüan-lieh wang 宣烈王 and his tomb is called Lieh-tsu 烈祖. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, pp. 3113-3115.

<sup>6</sup> Ch'ien-kuei was Kuo-jen's younger brother. After Kuo-jen's death the subjects all wanted Kuo-jen's son, Kung-fu 公府, who was very young, to be ruler and recommended Ch'ien-kuei to be Ta-tu-tu 大都督, Ta chiang chün 大將軍, Ta ch'an-yü 大單于, Ho-nan wang 河南王. The year name was changed to be T'ai-ch'ü 太初. Ch'ien-kuei made various appointments and returned to Chin ch'eng. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3116.

of the Ti 氏 clan, Yang-ting 楊定, and obtained the land of Lung-hsi 隴西 and Pa-hsi 巴西 and also acquired Shang-kuei 上邽 for a time, thus moving the Western Ch'in to its easternmost extent. He was appeased by Fu Teng 苻登 (last "nominal" ruler of the Former Ch'in, then besieged in eastern Kansu) on several occasions, and also by the T'u-yü-hun 吐谷渾 in the west. He successfully defeated Lü Pao 呂寶, brother of Lü Kuang 呂光, ruler of Later Liang 後涼 in central Kansu. Later, however, in 397, Ch'ien-kuei submitted to the overwhelming strength of Lü Kuang and became a vassal to Later Liang. Eventually, Ch'ien-kuei defeated Lü Kuang.<sup>7</sup>

When Ch'ien-kuei moved to Yüan ch'üan, Yao Hsing (and his general Yao Shih-te 姚碩德) of Later Ch'in attacked Western Ch'in (in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of A.D. 400). Ch'ien-kuei was defeated and fled to Southern Liang 南涼, but in the 8<sup>th</sup> month he surrendered to Yao Hsing. In the 11<sup>th</sup> month Yao Hsing gave Ch'ien-kuei various official titles and for a time Ch'ien-kuei became a vassal to Yao Hsing.<sup>8</sup> By

<sup>7</sup> In 389 (T'ai-yüan 14<sup>th</sup> year), Fu Teng, the nominal leader of the Former Ch'in at that time and besieged in Kansu by the Later Ch'in, sent an emissary granting titles to Ch'ien-kuei, clearly to appease Ch'ien-kuei. Tu-ju 獨如 of the southern Ch'iang ethnic group led 7,000 and surrendered to Ch'ien-kuei. Ch'ien-kuei secured his boundaries at Ch'ien-t'un shan 牽屯山, received gifts from T'u-yü-hun 吐谷渾 strongman Shih-lien 視連, and received surrender from various Hsien-pi leaders, who all received titles from Ch'ien-kuei. The governor of Lung-hsi 隴西, Yüeh-chih Chieh-kuei 腰質結歸 rebelled. When Ch'ien-kuei defeated him, Chieh-kuei fled east to Lung shan 隴山, then, leading his soldiers, he surrendered. Ch'ien-kuei made him a general. Fu Teng's general Mo I-yü 沒奕于 sent an emissary to make a friendly relation and he sent his two sons as hostages. Then Mo I-yü asked Ch'ien-kuei's help to attack the Hsien-pi. Ch'ien-kuei was successful at An-yang ch'eng 安陽城; then he returned to Chin ch'eng. Ch'ien-kuei was attacked and defeated by Lü Kuang's 呂光 brother, Pao 寶. Ch'ien-kuei sent his general to cut off Pao's return route. Then, himself wearing armor, Ch'ien-kuei defeated Pao in a series of battles. Pao and his soldiers threw themselves into the river. Over 10,000 died. Fu Teng sent his emissary to give many titles and appointments to Ch'ien-kuei, including Ho-nan wang 河南王 and governor of Liang chou's five chün. Then Fu Teng was attacked by Yao Hsing 姚興, so Fu Teng asked for Ch'ien-kuei's help and gave him the title of Liang wang 梁王 and married Ch'ien-kuei's sister, etc. Ch'ien-kuei sent his generals Ch'i-fu I-chou 乞伏益州 and Ti-wen 翟瑠 to lead more than 20,000 to rescue Fu Teng. But Fu Teng was killed by Yao Hsing, so Ch'ien-kuei's army returned. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, pp. 3116-3117.

Ch'ien-kuei was attacked by Ti-wang 氏王 Yang-ting 楊定 leading 40,000 cavalry. Ch'ien-kuei considered this an opportune occurrence. Although near defeat, Ch'ien-kuei's troops rallied under I-chou 益州 and Chieh-kuei 結歸. Yang-ting was greatly defeated. Thusly Ch'ien-kuei obtained all the land of Lung-hsi 隴西 and Pa-hsi 巴西. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3117.

In T'ai-yüan 17<sup>th</sup> year (392), Ch'ien-kuei made a pardon within his territory and appointed his first son, Chih-p'an, to various positions and made other appointments. He called himself Ta-ch'an-yü, Ta-chiang-chün. When Yang-ting died, T'ien-shui's 天水 Chiang-ju 姜乳 attacked and occupied Shang-kuei 上邽. Ch'ien-kuei sent Ch'i-fu I-chou 乞伏益州 as the general, despite some hesitation regarding I-chou's arrogance and pride. Nevertheless, I-chou was successful in defeating him. Others surrendered to Ch'ien-kuei. Lü Kuang 呂光 led 100,000 soldiers and attacked Ch'ien-kuei. Considering the overwhelming strength of Lü Kuang, Ch'ien-kuei submitted to be a vassal and sent his son Ch'ih-po 敕勃 to be hostage. Ch'ien-kuei later regretted this and killed those who had recommended that course of action. Some, including I-chou 益州, defected to Lü Kuang. When Lü Kuang [again] attacked Ch'ien-kuei, Ch'ien-kuei did not follow the advice to run away. Instead, he decided to use clever strategy, though his soldiers did not agree. In Lung-an 隆安 first year (397 A.D.) Lü-kuang sent his son Tsuan 纂 to attack Ch'ien-kuei. Ch'ien-kuei sent a spy to say that Ch'ien-kuei's army was weakening and fleeing east. Lü Kuang's general, Lü Yen 呂延, believed this and only lightly prepared to advance. He was defeated and killed by Ch'ien-kuei.

T'u-fa Wu-kou 禿髮烏孤 sent an emissary and made a marriage relation. Ch'ien-kuei attacked three cities and captured 10,000 prisoners and returned. Then he sent Ti-wen 翟瑠 with 20,000 cavalry and attacked T'u-yü-hun Shih-p'i 吐谷渾視羝 and defeated him. Shih-p'i escaped to Pai-lan shan 白蘭山 and made his son to be a hostage. The Hsien-pi Tieh-chüeh 鮮卑疊掘 (Ho-nei 河內) led 5,000 families from [T'o-pa] Wei 拓跋魏 (The Northern Wei) and surrendered to Ch'ien-kuei. Ch'ien-kuei was staying at Nan-ch'ing-men 南景門. It was ruined and he did not like that, so he moved to Yüan-ch'üan. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, pp. 3188-3119.

<sup>8</sup> Yao Hsing's general Yao Shih-te 姚碩德 led 50,000 soldiers and attacked him [at Yüan-ch'üan]. In order to fight against Yao Shih-te, Ch'ien-kuei went to Lung-hsi 隴西. Then Yao Hsing, hiding his army, joined [Yao shih-te].

407 Ch'ien-kuei had experienced some military successes and captured Nan-an 南安, Lung-hsi 隴西 and various other chüns 郡 and moved 25,000 families to Fu-han 枹罕, which had been previously captured by his son, Chih-p'an. In 407 (or 409), 7<sup>th</sup> month, Ch'ien-kuei became "Ch'in wang" 秦王 and changed the *nien hao* to be Keng-shih 更始 (409-411).

After much back and forth attack and loss, Ch'ien-kuei was again able to regain various chüns and Yüan-ch'uan, which he made his capital in 410 and moved 25,000 families to both Yüan-ch'uan and Fu-han. With Yao Hsing (of the Later Ch'in) too weak to attack, he sent an emissary to Ch'ien-kuei giving him many titles, including that of Ho-nan wang 河南王. Near the end of his rule, Ch'ien-kuei attempted to gain territory from the T'u-fa 秃髮 (Southern Liang) and T'u-yü-hun 吐谷渾 to the west.<sup>9</sup>

In 412 Ch'ien-kuei was killed by the son of his elder brother (the previous ruler, Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen).<sup>10</sup> The center of his territory had first been at Chin ch'eng (Lan chou), then he moved to Yüan ch'uan. By

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Ch'ien-kuei heard that Yao Hsing was coming. During the battle, Ch'ien-kuei lost. He fled to Yüan-ch'uan and then finally to Chin ch'eng. There he told his generals he was not good enough to lead. He separated from them and went to Yün-wu 允吾. Finally, he sent Chih-p'an and his brothers to Hsi-p'ing 西平 (i.e., he sent his crown prince and other sons as hostage to the T'u-fa). Ch'ien-kuei subsequently went to Ch'ang-an (i.e., Ch'ien-kuei became a vassal to Yao Hsing). Yao Hsing was greatly pleased and gave titles to Ch'ien-kuei and sent him to stay at Yüan ch'uan and to lead his soldiers. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, pp. 3119-3121.

In Yüan-hsing 元興 first year (Eastern Chin, 402 A.D.), Chih-p'an went from Hsi-p'ing 西平 to Ch'ang-an. Yao Hsing gave him titles and also sent additional titles to Ch'ien-kuei. Ch'ien-kuei followed Yao Hsing's general Chi-nan 齊難 to welcome Lü Lung 呂隆 at Ho-hsi and to attack the Ch'iang's 羌 Tang Lung-t'ou 党龍頭 and others, including the T'u-yü-hun general Ta-hai 大孩. He was successful in a series of various battles. Yao Hsing worried about Ch'ien-kuei becoming a problem in Hsi chou 西州. Yao Hsing therefore appointed Chih-p'an to several positions. In Ch'ang-an Chih-p'an started to rebel with Ch'ang-an soldiers. He joined with others and built a city castle at K'ang-liang shan 嶮 [山良] 山. Then Chih-p'an attacked and controlled Fu-han 枹罕 and sent an emissary to report it. Ch'ien-kuei went back to Yüan-ch'uan. The Hsien-pi 鮮卑 Yüeh Ta-chien 悅大堅 surrendered to Ch'ien-kuei, who then went to Fu-han and made Chih-p'an stay there. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3121.

In I-hsi 義熙 3<sup>rd</sup> year (Eastern Chin, 407 A.D.) Ch'ien-kuei proclaimed himself to be Ch'in wang 秦王, changed the *nien-hao* to be Keng-shih 更始 and established the 100 offices. He sent Chih-p'an to attack and control Po Ti-yen 薄地延. Then he (Chih-p'an) took the army and went to Fan-yü 煩于. Ti-yen came out and surrendered and Ch'ien-kuei moved his (Ti-yen's) group to Yüan ch'uan. He also sent Lung-hsi 隴西 Ch'iang 羌 Ch'ang-ho 昌何 to attack and win over Yao Hsing's Chin ch'eng chün 金城郡. Then he set up Ch'i-fu Wu-ho 乞伏務和 to be the governor of Tung Chin ch'eng 東金城 and Ch'ien-kuei again made Yüan ch'uan to be capital. Again Ch'ien-kuei attacked and won over the various chüns 郡 of Lüeh-yang 略陽, Nan-an 南安, and Lung-hsi 隴西. Then he moved 25,000 households to Yüan-ch'uan and Fu-han. Yao Hsing (r. 393-416) was not strong enough to attack west as he was afraid to be harmed in the border areas. So Yao Hsing sent an emissary and gave many titles to Ch'ien-kuei (including Ho-nan wang 河南王). Ch'ien-kuei in fact planned to occupy Ho-yu 河右 and so he temporarily accepted. Finally, he called himself to be vassal of Yao Hsing. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3122.

<sup>9</sup> Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei sent Chih-p'an and his next son, Shen-ch'ien 審虔, to lead a cavalry of 10,000 and attack T'u-fa Nü-t'an 秃髮儁檀. The army crossed the Ho 河 (Yellow River) and destroyed Nü-t'an's crown prince, Wu-t'ai 武臺 at Ling-nan 崑南. They captured cows and horses (100,000 some) and returned. He also attacked and won over Yao Lung 姚龍 at Pai-yang pao 伯陽堡 garrison and Wang Ching 王憬 at Yung-lo ch'eng 永洛城 and moved 4,000 some households to Yüan ch'uan and 3,000 some families to T'an-chiao 譚郊. Ch'ien-kuei led 30,000 cavalry west and attacked Ch'iang 羌 P'en Li-fa 彭利髮 at Fu-han. P'en Li-fa deserted his soldiers and ran south. Ch'ien-kuei sent his general Kung-fu 公府, who chased him to Ch'ing shui 清水 and killed him. Ch'ien-kuei entered Fu-han 枹罕 and took 13,000 Ch'iang 羌 families. Then he led a cavalry of 20,000 to attack T'u-yü-hun 吐谷渾 Chih-t'ung 支統 and A-ju-kan 阿若干 at Ch'ih shui 赤水 and soundly defeated them. *Chin-shu*, chüan 125, p. 3122.

<sup>10</sup> When Ch'ien-kuei was stationed at Wu-ch'i 五谿 there was a bad omen. Six years after he became Ch'in-wang, Ch'ien-kuei was killed by his elder brother's son, Kung-fu (son of Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen) and his sons, 10 some. Then Kung-fu went under the protection (control) of Ta Hsia 大夏. Chih-p'an, along with Ch'ien-kuei's younger brother Kuang-wu 廣武, Chih-ta 智達, and Yang-ku's Mo I-yü 木奕子, went and attacked Kung-fu. Kung-fu fled. Chih-ta and others chased him and captured him at K'ang-liang-nan shan 嶮 [山良] 南山 together with four of his sons. They were killed by chariot at T'an-chiao 譚郊. The funeral for Ch'ien-kuei was at Fu-han. Posthumously he was made Wu-yüan wang 武元王. He had been in reign for 24 years. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3122.



the end of his reign Fu-han (present Lin-hsia, near the Ping-ling ssu area, see Fig. 1.1 map) had become another major stronghold under the Western Ch'in, governed by Ch'ien-kuei's son, Chih-p'an.

C. *Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (r. 412-427): Consolidation and Height of the Western Ch'in*

The most powerful ruler of the Western Ch'in was Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an 乞伏熾磐, first son of Ch'ien-kuei. He ruled from 412-428 A.D.—the most prosperous period of the Western Ch'in. It was, however, a period of relative devastation for the Ch'ang-an region, which encountered the collapse of the Later Ch'in 後秦 in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of 417 by Liu Yü 劉裕 from the Eastern Chin 東晉 (317-420) in the South. That was followed by the forced withdrawal of the Eastern Chin in the 11<sup>th</sup> month of 418 by the invasion of the ruthless Ho-lien Po-po 赫連勃勃, leader of the Ta Hsia 大夏 (407-431), which then controlled Ch'ang-an and kuan-chung 關中 until its defeat by the T'o-pa Wei 拓跋魏 during the years 428-431.<sup>11</sup> These dramatic and devastating changes in the Ch'ang-an area created a situation where the Western Ch'in was relatively undisturbed from the eastern direction, thus easing its defense for a number of years and allowing opportunities for conquest to the north and west.

During the rule of his father, Chih-p'an had been a hostage son to the T'u-fa (Southern Liang), but then had escaped from Hsi-p'ing (Fig. 1.1) and surrendered to Yao Hsing, who gave him titles and let him protect Yüan ch'uan. When Ch'ien-kuei returned to governing, he established Chih-p'an as crown prince in 392 (T'ai-yüan 17<sup>th</sup> year). Later, when Ch'ien-kuei surrendered to Later Ch'in, Yao Hsing gave more titles to Chih-p'an. After Ch'ien-kuei died, Chih-p'an ascended, granted a great pardon, and changed the year to the Yung-k'ang 永康. Early in his reign he acquired land and households from the T'u-yü-hun to the west and from the Ch'iang to the south. Many of these families were moved to Fu-han 枹罕, which he made as the capital.<sup>12</sup> In 413, when the head of the T'u-fa (T'u-fa Nü-t'an 禿髮傉檀 r. 402-414) went west and attacked the I-fu 乙弗 (a Hsien-pi group), Chih-p'an took the opportunity to attack T'u-fa territory and conquered Lo-tu 樂都 (Fig. 1.1), capital of the T'u-fa Southern Liang kingdom. Shortly after, Nü-t'an surrendered to Chih-p'an, thus Chih-p'an acquired the lands and people of the Southern Liang kingdom (in Kansu and Ch'ing-hai around Lake Kokonor). This considerably enlarged and strengthened the Western Ch'in.<sup>13</sup> The next year (414) Chih-p'an

<sup>11</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 372-382 for details.

<sup>12</sup> In I-hsi 義熙 9<sup>th</sup> year (413 A.D.) he sent Lung-hsiang 龍驤, Ch'i-fu Chih-ta 乞伏智達, and P'ing-tung's 平東 Wang Sung-shou 王松壽 to attack T'u-yü hun 吐谷揮 Shu Lo-kan 樹洛干 at Chiao-ho 洮河. They greatly defeated Shu Lo-kan, captured a general and 3,000-some households. Then Chih-p'an sent Chen-tung's 鎮東 T'an-ta 曇達 and Sung-shou 松壽 leading a cavalry of 10,000 east to attack Hsiu kuan 休官, Chüan Hsiao-lang 權小郎 and Lü Po-hu 呂破胡 at Pai-shih ch'uan 白石川. They captured 10,000 men and women, advanced and occupied Pai-shih ch'eng. Hsiu-kuan surrendered together with 10,000-some people. Later, Hsien-ch'in 顯親, Hsiu-kuan 休官, Chüan Hsiao-ch'eng 權小城 and Lü Nu-chia 呂奴迦 and others rebelled and held Pai-keng 白坑. T'an-ta 曇達 attacked Pai-keng, killed Hsiao-ch'in and Ju-chia, and beheaded 4,700. Lung-yu's Hsiu-kuan surrendered. Then Chih-p'an attacked the T'u-yü-hun and defeated them at Ch'i-ch'in ch'uan 泣勤川. Chih-p'an led all his generals to attack the T'u-yü-hun controlling person Chih-p'ang 支旁 at Ch'ang-liu ch'uan 長柳川 and Chüeh-ta 掘達 at K'o-hun ch'uan 渴渾川, destroying all and capturing 28,000 men and women. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3123-3124.

<sup>13</sup> After seeing auspicious five-colored clouds over Nan-shan 南山, Ch'ih-p'an rejoiced, thinking this was a good omen. So he prepared for an opportunity for great accomplishment that year. When the head of the T'u-fu, T'u-fu Nü-t'an 禿髮傉檀, went west and attacked the I-fu 乙弗, Chih-p'an saw this as an opportunity and led 20,000 cavalry and attacked the city of Lo-tu 樂都 (capital of the T'i-fu Southern Liang kingdom) (Fig. 1.1). T'u-fa Wu-t'ai 禿髮武臺 relied on the defense of his city and resisted, but after 10 days Chih-p'an won. He sent P'ing-yüan's 平遠 Chien-k'u 虔度 with 5,000 cavalry to chase Nü-t'an and he moved T'u-fa Wu-t'ai 禿髮武臺, his military and civilian officials and 10,000 some families to Fu-han. Nü-t'an finally surrendered to Chih-p'an, who gave him titles and integrated his land and his people.

attacked Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün's (Northern Liang) governor of Ho-huang 河湟, Chü-ch'ü Han-p'ing 沮渠漢平. Then he also attacked I-fu 乙弗 K'u-ch'ien 窟乾 and sent his general T'an-ta 曇達 south to attack the Ch'iang. After some sparring between the armies of Chih-p'an and Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün, the latter offered a marriage alliance, which Chih-p'an accepted, thus eliminating some anxiety in the northwest direction.<sup>14</sup>

The various Hsien-pi clans to the north had previously been subdued by Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen and Ch'ien-kuei and events of the time in Ch'ang-an kept his eastern flank relatively free of attack as Chih-p'an enlarged territories to the south and west.<sup>15</sup> However, he sent T'an-ta 曇達 east to attack Yao I 姚艾 (a general of the Later Ch'in) in Shang-kuei 上邽 (near T'ien-shui, see Fig. 1.1). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of 416, Yao Hsing of Later Ch'in died. In the 4<sup>th</sup> month T'an-ta defeated Yao I, who then fled back to Shang-kuei for sanctuary. Western Ch'in then made a garrison at Ma-t'ou 馬頭 (near Shang-kuei) and in the 10<sup>th</sup> month of 417, led by T'an-ta, attacked Shang-kuei, which surrendered. Yao I defected. Chih-p'an made Yao I governor of Ch'in chou 秦州 (Fig. 1.1). Around the same time, Mo I-yü 木奕于 pushed back and secured the borders with the T'u-yü-hun in the west, so the Western Ch'in kingdom became relatively secure on all borders. The I-fu Hsien-pi also surrendered to Chih-p'an with 20,000 families. After some troubles with them, part of the group was sent to Hsi-p'ing 西平 (Fig. 1.1). In the 10<sup>th</sup> month of 418, Yao I, whom Chih-p'an had made governor of Ch'in chou, rebelled and surrendered to Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün of Northern Liang, but Yao I's uncle Yao Chün 姚儁 persuaded the people and soldiers to go to Chih-p'an instead, rather than going all the way west to central Kansu to Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün. Chih-p'an then made T'an-ta governor of Ch'in chou with a garrison at Nan-an 南安. Chih-p'an attacked the T'u-yü-hun, defeating Mi-ti 覓地, who surrendered with his 60,000-man army. He also destroyed P'eng Li-ho 彭利和 at Ch'iang ch'uan 强川. P'eng Li-ho fled and Chih-p'an then moved 3,000 Ch'iang families to Fu-han. With his kingdom relatively stable, Chih-p'an established his second son, Mu-mo 慕末, as crown prince in Yüan-hsi 元熙 first year (Eastern Chin, 419 A.D.). He then changed the year to be Chien-hung 建弘 (in 420). In 421 Chih-p'an again attacked Shang-kuei, but there was too much rain, so he withdrew. In 426 [Liu] Sung recognized the Western Ch'in. In Yüan-chia 4<sup>th</sup> year (427), Chih-p'an died.<sup>16</sup>

In this way the land of the Ch'i-fu was enlarged and the Ch'i-fu became stronger. Chih-p'an established the 100 offices and made his T'u-fa wife to be queen. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3124.

<sup>14</sup> In 415 (I-hsi 11<sup>th</sup> year) Chih-p'an attacked and won over Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün's Ho-huang 河湟 governor, Chü-ch'ü Han-p'ing 沮渠漢平. He appointed P'i-k'uei 匹逵 to be the Ho-huang t'ai-shou (governor). Then Chih-p'an attacked I-fu 乙弗 Ku-chien 窟乾 and made him surrender and then he (Ch'ih-p'an) returned. Then he sent T'an-ta and others to attack the Ch'iang 羌 in the south and defeated the Ch'iang. When Chih-p'an attacked Ch'iang ch'uan 强川 and then went to T'a chung 沓中, Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün led his army and attacked Shih-ch'üan 石泉 in order to save Shih-ch'üan. Chih-p'an heard about this, retreated and returned. Then he sent T'an-ta with his general Ch'u Lien-ch'ien 出連度 to lead 5,000 cavalry to go [to Shih-ch'üan]. When Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün heard that T'an-ta was coming, he pulled back and returned [home]. Then Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün sent an emissary to Chih-p'an offering a marriage alliance. Subsequently, they made an in-law relation. *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3124.

<sup>15</sup> Later Ch'in 後秦 was weakening in the latter days of Yao Hsing (r. 393-416). During the tumultuous transition period in Ch'ang-an from 418-420 when Yao Hung 姚泓 (r. 416-418), last ruler of the Later Ch'in, was defeated in 418 by Liu Yü 劉裕 of the Eastern Chin and Ch'ang-an was conquered by Ho-lien Po-po 赫連勃勃 of Ta Hsia in 419, there was little threat to the Ch'i-fu from the eastern direction, aside from some of the Yao generals occupying the T'ien-shui area.

<sup>16</sup> *Chin shu*, chüan 125, pp. 3125-3126.

D. *Ch'i-fu Mu-mo (r. 427-431): Demise of the Western Ch'in*

Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, considered the greatest ruler of the Western Ch'in, was succeeded in 427 by his second son, Ch'i-fu Mu-mo 乞伏慕末. In 429 there was a devastating earthquake. In the 10<sup>th</sup> month of 430 Mu-mo burned his capital (Fu-han), intending to move 15,000 families to Shang-kuei and hoping to surrender to the T'o-pa Wei, who were then in control of Ch'ang-an. However, he was forced by conditions to stay at Nan-an (Fig. 1.1) where the situation became desperate as the whole area was under the throes of attack and defense between the T'o-pa Wei and the last rulers of Ta Hsia 大夏 (411-431). After the fall of T'ung-wan 統萬, the Ta Hsia stronghold in northern Shensi (Fig. 1.1), in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 426, Ho-lien Ch'ang 赫連昌, then ruler of the Ta Hsia, had fled to Shang-kuei, which the T'o-pa Wei attacked in 428. Ho-lien Ch'ang then retreated to P'ing-liang 平涼, but he was captured by the T'o-pa Wei at An-ting 安定 (Fig. 1.1). Then Ho-lien Ting 赫連定 became the Hsia leader. He returned to P'ing-liang from Shang-kuei and subsequently retook Ch'ang-an. In the 11<sup>th</sup> month of 430, as Ch'i-fu Mu-mo was in Nan-an, the T'o-pa Wei came to P'ing-liang and surrounded Ho-lien Ting at An-ting. Ho-lien Ting was seriously wounded and fled to Shang-kuei. Ta Hsia's prince, who was holding An-ting, finally abandoned the city and fled to Shang-kuei. In the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 430 Lüeh-yang 略陽 surrendered to Ta Hsia and the T'o-pa Wei captured P'ing-liang (Fig. 1.1).

Mu-mo had problems from the beginning of his rule. In 429 the area suffered a disastrous earthquake. Further, Mu-mo reacted with severe cruelty to some of the internal affairs at the court, including mercilessly killing family members.<sup>17</sup> When Mu-mo was pressed by Ho-lien Ting, himself in a defensive fight against the stronger forces of the T'o-pa Wei, Mu-mo appealed to Shih-tsu 世祖 (T'ai-wu ti 太武帝), then ruler of the T'o-pa Wei 拓跋魏 in Shansi. The *Wei shu* 魏書 provides the most detailed information concerning the final days of Mu-mo:

... [Mu-mo's] governing and punishments were very cruel. Within and without everything was crumbling and falling apart. Many people rebelled and the people were in turmoil. Later [Mu-mo] was pressed by Ho-lien Ting, so [Mu-mo] sent Wang K'ai 王愷 and Wu Na-t'ien 烏訥閼<sup>18</sup> to request to be received by Shih-tsu (i.e., to come under the protection of the T'o-pa Wei). Shih-tsu allowed this and enfeoffed [to Mu-mo] the territory west of An-ting 安定 and east of P'ing-liang 平涼. Mu-mo then burned the cities [in this area] and destroyed the treasure vessels and then led 15,000 households to Kao-t'ien-ku 高田谷. He was opposed by Ho-lien Ting. Subsequently [Mu-mo] went and guarded Nan-an 南安. Shih-tsu sent an envoy requesting [Mu-mo] to come. Mu-mo's Wei Chiang chün 衛將軍 general, Chi P'i 吉毗 strongly admonished [Mu-mo] against this, because he thought that Mu-mo should not move about. Mu-mo followed this [advice]. Ho-lien Ting sent his prince, Pei P'ing kung 北平公 Wei Tai 韋伐 leading 10,000 strong to attack Nan-an. Inside the city there was massive starvation and people were eating each other. In Shen-chia 神鹿/加 4<sup>th</sup> year (Northern Wei, 431 A.D.), Mu-mo and his clan, 500 some persons, went out and surrendered. [Then they] were sent to Shang-kuei.<sup>19</sup>

The *Pei shih* 北史 adds that Ch'i-fu Mu-mo was subsequently killed by Ho-lien Ting.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Wei shu*, chüan 99, p. 2199.

<sup>18</sup> From an earlier passage in the *Wei shu* we learn that before he died Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an had sent his Shang shu lang 尚書郎 Mu Hu 莫胡 and the Chi-sha Chiang chün 積射將軍 Ch'i-fu Wu-yen 乞伏又寅 with tribute of 200 *ch'in* of yellow gold to T'o-pa Tao 燾 (Shih-tsu 世祖, T'ai-wu ti 太武帝) of the Wei 魏 and asked him to attack Ho-lien Ch'ang. Shih-tsu agreed and attacked and occupied T'ung-wan (stronghold of the Ta Hsia in northern Shensi). *Wei shu*, chüan 99, p. 2199.

<sup>19</sup> *Wei shu*, chüan 99, pp. 2199-2200.

<sup>20</sup> *Pei shih*, chüan 93, p. 3081.

In 431 the Ta Hsia attacked Nan-an where Mu-mo and his people were in a condition of starvation. Mu-mo surrendered and was sent to Shang-kuei where he was killed by Ho-lien Ting, thus ending the Western Ch'in.<sup>21</sup> In the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 431 Ho-lien Ting, pursued by the T'o-pa Wei and hoping to capture land of the Northern Liang, fled westward. Halfway across the [Yellow] River, he was captured by T'u-yü-hun Mu-kuei 吐谷渾慕瑰 (who later sent Ho-lien Ting to the T'o-pa Wei), and thus Ta Hsia collapsed. Much of the territory of Ta Hsia and the Western Ch'in kingdoms was captured by the T'o-pa Wei in the conquests of 431.<sup>22</sup>

In the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 432 [Liu] Sung made Yang Nan-tang 楊難当, who was of the Ti 氐 (ethnic minority) and was the North Ch'in chou governor (北秦州刺史), to be the Cheng-hsi Chiang-chün 征西將軍 general. Yang Nan-tang then made Tsu Shun 子順 to be the Ch'in chou governor (Ch'in chou tz'u shih 秦州刺史), in control of the garrison at Shang-kuei (Fig. 1.1).<sup>23</sup> At this point, it appears that [Liu] Sung was trying to attain some power in the region through the leader of the Ti clan, Yang Nan-tang. However, four years later, in 436, Yang Nan-tang declared his independence by naming himself to be Ta Ch'in wang 大秦王 and established his year to be Chien-i 建義. In the 7<sup>th</sup> month of 436, the T'o-pa Wei ruler by edict made Lo-p'ing wang 樂平王 P'i 丕 and others to comprise the various armies of Ho-hsi Kao-p'ing 河西高平 and to attack Yang Nan-tang. In the 9<sup>th</sup> month P'i and the others arrived at Lüeh-yang 略陽 (Fig. 1.1). By edict Yang Nan-tang was ordered to unite and control the armies at Shang-kuei and then to return to his homeland at Ch'ou-ch'ih 仇池 (Fig. 1.1). In the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 439 the T'o-pa Wei made Yang Pao-tsung 楊保宗 to be the Ch'in chou mu-wu-tu wang 秦州牧武都王 (governor) garrisoned at Shang-kuei. In the 9<sup>th</sup> month of that year, the T'o-pa Wei attacked Ku-tsang.<sup>24</sup>

Among the Sixteen Kingdoms, the Western Ch'in ruled by the Ch'i-fu was relatively long-lived (46 years). The main strongholds of the Western Ch'in were first at Chin ch'eng, Yüan ch'uan, and Yung-shih ch'eng, and then from 412 at Fu-han, not far from Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 1.2). Hsi-p'ing also became a major area after the defeat of the T'u-fa by Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an in 413. This may have facilitated travel on the trade route from Fu-han to Hsi-p'ing to Ch'ang-yeh 張掖 (central Kansu) and beyond (Fig. 1.2). The area of the kingdom was quite extensive, but difficult to defend, as it was surrounded by multiple tribes, groups and kingdoms. Most of the energies of the leaders appear to have been spent in simply gaining, securing and protecting territory and people and not in implementing governmental policies that might have enriched the kingdom through exploiting the trade along the silk roads into

<sup>21</sup> The Ch'i-fu seem to have had little interference from the Ta Hsia and Ho-lien Po-po. After Po-po acquired Ch'ang-an in 419, he showed little interest even in Ch'ang-an, much less the west, preferring to reside in T'ung-wan 統萬, his stronghold castle in the north, in order to allay the encroachments of the increasingly strong T'o-pa Wei 拓跋魏. However, in the period when the T'o-pa Wei made their successful move west in the mid-420's and Ta Hsia struggled vainly for survival, the last leader of the Western Ch'in, Chih-p'an's son, Mu-mo, was killed by Ho-lien Ting as he fled west from Ch'ang-an at the onslaught of the T'o-pa Wei. Ho-lien Ting assumed the throne of Ta Hsia in P'ing-liang (Kansu) in 428 when his elder brother Ho-lien Ch'ang 赫連昌, who had usurped the throne, was captured by the T'o-pa Wei. A month later Ho-lien Ting regained Ch'ang-an, but the T'o-pa Wei returned by the end of 430 and gained control of all of kuan-chung (Shensi). In 431 Ho-lien Ting was captured by the T'u-yü-hun and sent to the T'o-pa Wei capital the following year to be killed. See M. Rhie (2002), p. 382; Huang Wen-k'un and Ho Ching-ch'en, "Bakusekizan sekkutsu kankei nenbyō" (A Chronological Table Concerning the Maijishan Grottoes [gathered from historical records]), in *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, Tokyo, 1987, p. 307.

<sup>22</sup> *Chin shu*, chüan 125, pp. 3125-3126.

<sup>23</sup> Huang and Ho (1987), p. 307.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.



China, several of which went through Western Ch'in territory (Fig. 1.2; also see Appendix 1 for the communication routes of this time). Control of Chin ch'eng (Lan chou) could have been favorably used, but, according to Eberhard, the tradesmen and caravans preferred the northern route through the Ordos, by-passing the territory of the Western Ch'in, which was considered too unstable.<sup>25</sup> Probably the route from Fu-han through Hsi-p'ing to Ch'ang-yeh provided some lucrative trade for the Ch'i-fu, but not enough to make it one of the wealthier kingdoms.

The Ch'i-fu frequently encountered struggles with the great powers centered in Ch'ang-an, first with Fu Chien (Former Ch'in) and then with Yao Hsing (Later Ch'in). Near the end of the Western Ch'in kingdom, the warfare between the T'o-pa Wei and the Ta Hsia in the kuan chung (Shensi) and Ch'in chou areas complicated an already bad situation for the Western Ch'in, which was ultimately overwhelmed. The middle period from around 418-428 was the most prosperous and relatively peaceful period, and the time when the Western Ch'in reached its height.

## II. BUDDHIST ACTIVITIES IN THE WESTERN CH'IN FROM WRITTEN RECORDS

Although little is specifically known about Buddhism in the Western Ch'in, there are a few records, such as the *Li-tai san-pao chi* 歷代三寶記 (Sui), the *K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T'ang), the biographies of the monks in the *Kao-seng chuan* 高僧傳 (ca. 530), the *Chin shu* 晉書 (T'ang) and others, which provide some glimpses into the Buddhist activities that intersected with the Western Ch'in period and region. These records indicate that at least the first three main leaders of the Western Ch'in (Kuo-jen, Ch'ien-kuei and Chih-p'an) were favorable to Buddhism and encouraged it. They also provide a glimpse of some of the famous monks related to events taking place in the Western Ch'in kingdom. They show not only some fascinating details that bring the period into sharper focus, but also reveal some of the major purposes behind the interest in the Western Regions (Central Asia and India) for some leading Chinese monks of this period, in addition to providing an indication of the Buddhist texts and practices that were of special concern to the people of the area controlled by the Western Ch'in. The biographies of the monks Sheng-chien 聖堅, Fa-hsien 法顯, Hsüan-ko 玄高 and Hui-lan 慧覽 are translated and presented in whole or in part here for the evidences they impart for understanding elements of Buddhism in that area. They are also useful in other segments of this book in understanding the overall picture of Kansu and how it relates to what we have learned in Volume II regarding the southern and northern areas of China at this time. The inscriptions at Ping-ling ssu and Mai-chi shan that shed light on the donors and the Buddhist texts related to the art will be specifically addressed throughout the following chapters.

### A. Sheng-chien 聖堅 : Buddhist Monk Translator

Both the *Li-tai san-pao chi* 歷代三寶記 (Sui) and the *K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T'ang) make note of the Buddhist monk Sheng-chien who came to Western Ch'in and was asked by Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen (the *Li-tai san-pao chi*) and/or Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei (*K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu*) to translate texts. Both records say he translated 15 individual texts (in 21 chüan). According to the *Li-tai san-pao chi*:

... Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen was a Lung-hsi Hsien-pi 隴西鮮卑. His ancestors lived (or for a generation he) lived at Yüan ch'uan 苑川 as the Nan-shan-yü 南禪于 (southern leader). After the collapse of Former Ch'in

<sup>25</sup> W. Eberhard, *A History of China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977, p. 131.

(in 385), he subsequently called himself to be Ch'in wang 秦王. As before, the capital was at Tz'u ch'eng 子城 (same as Yüan ch'uan). He honored the affairs of the Buddhist monks (sha men 沙門). At that time he welcomed Sheng-chien 聖堅, who was traveling around propagating Buddhism and came there. [Kuo-jen]'s benevolence increased and he revered [Sheng-chien]. [Kuo-jen's] favors and respects were extremely abundant. Already the Buddhist customs were widely spread; then [Kuo-jen] ordered [Sheng-chien] to translate [sutras] ...<sup>26</sup>

The *Li-tai san-pao chi* further mentions in a list that:

Hsi Ch'in 西秦 Ch'i-fu 乞伏 sha men 沙門 Shih 釋 Sheng-chien 聖堅 [put out] 14 individual texts (pu 部) in 21 chüan (二十一卷經)

Among them the lost (chu shih i ching 諸失譯經) translated sutras are 8 individual texts in 11 chüan<sup>27</sup>

This list indicates that Sheng-chien translated 14 texts (sutras) in 21 chüan and that among those, 8 were lost by the Sui Dynasty (581-617), the date of the compilation of the *Li-tai san-pao chi*. It would appear that, like some other rulers of the various states of the Sixteen Kingdoms, the Ch'i-fu leaders also encouraged translation projects in their kingdom. However, the quantity appears to be less when compared with the productions under the Eastern Chin, Former Liang, Former Ch'in, [Liu] Sung and the Northern Liang.

The excerpt from the *K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu* records the following:

... Ch'in Ch'i-fu clan's capital is Yüan ch'uan 苑川 (also called Western Ch'in 西秦). From Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen (posthumous title: Hsüan-lieh wang 宣列王), Chien-i 建義 first year, i-ch'iu 乙酉, to Ch'i-fu Mu-mo (without posthumous title), Yung-hung 永弘 4th year, hsin-wei 辛未, [the Western Ch'in] passed through four leaders and about 47 years. One Buddhist monk (sha men) translated sutras. Also the Three Ch'in Period (San Ch'in tai 三秦代, that is, the period of the Former Ch'in, Later Ch'in and Western Ch'in) [had] new and old lost translated sutras, vinaya, commentaries, etc., in 56 individual texts in 110 chüan (among these, 32 individual texts in 79 chüan presently exist; 24 texts in 31 chüan are missing). (Ch'i-fu Ch'in's sha-men Shih Sheng-chien 聖堅 [had] 15 texts in 24 chüan.<sup>28</sup>

The excerpt continues with a list:

Three Ch'in Period new and old various lost translated sutras (41 texts in 86 chüan; 7 texts in 7 chüan [are from the] old collection; 34 texts in 79 chüan are new additions):

- 1) *Lo-mo-chia ching* 羅摩伽經, 3 chüan (This is the Ju-fa-chieh p'in 入法界品 [Entering the Dharma World section] of the *Hua-yen ching*; for a different translation, see in the *T'ien-lu* 典錄)
- 2) *T'ai-tzu Hsü-ta-na ching* 太子須大拏經, 1 chüan (Sui person appended [this entry] to the Ch'in group)
- 3) *Shan-tzu ching* 睽子經, 1 chüan
- 4) *Mo ho ch'a t'ou ching* 摩訶剎頭經, 1 chüan
- 5) *Wu yai chi ch'ih fa men ching* 無崖際持法門經, 1 chüan
- 6) *Yen tao su yeh ching* 演道俗業經, 1 chüan
- 7) *Ch'u k'ung tsai huan ching* 除恐災患經, 1 chüan

<sup>26</sup> *Li-tai san-pao chi*, (Sui Kai-huang 17th year), chüan 9, in *Daizōkyō*, 49 (T 2034), p. 82b.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83a.

<sup>28</sup> *K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu* 開元釋教錄, (T'ang, K'ai-yüan 18th year), chüan 4, in *Daizōkyō*, 55 (T 2154), p. 517c.

- 8) *Hsien shou ching* 賢首經, 1 chüan
- 9) *A-nan fen-pieh ching* 阿難分別經, 1 chüan
- 10) *Fu-jen yü ku ching* 婦人遇辜經, 1 chüan
- 11) *Fang teng chu hsü kung tsang ching* 方等主虛空藏經, 8 chüan
- 12) *P'u-sa so sheng ti ching* 菩薩所生地經, 1 chüan (added to Western Ch'in)
- 13) *P'ei ching* 悝經, 1 chüan
- 14) *T'ung chia yeh chieh nan ching* 僮迦葉解難經, 1 chüan
- 15) *Ch'i nü pen ching* 七女本經, 1 chüan

Concerning the 15 texts in 24 chüan listed, the 10 texts in 12 chüan [listed] before the *Fu-jen yü ku ching* (no. 10 in the list) presently exist; the 5 texts in 12 chüan [listed] after that are missing.<sup>29</sup>

The excerpt continues:

Sha men Shih Sheng-chien, sometimes called Fa-chien 法堅, is also called Chien-kung 堅公. It is not clear who he was (i.e., what he did), therefore [I am] providing and arranging what is known. He was of great capacity and tolerance, was widely known and improved his mind. In Ch'i-fu Ch'in 乞伏秦 T'ai-ch'u 太初 period (389–406), in the Ho-nan 河南 kingdom (i.e., Western Ch'in) he translated for [Ch'i-fu] Ch'ien-kuei 乾歸 the *Lo-mo-chia* 羅摩伽 and other sutras, [altogether] 15 texts.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, Sheng-chien travelled around teaching. At the various places where he settled he produced sutras. [comment by the author follows:] Finally, I do not know where to go [for information] and do not know what dynastic records [to search]. Now, according to the custom of commentary, I am following what is said in the Ch'i-fu Ch'in's generation records 乞伏秦世錄.<sup>31</sup>

From these records it would appear that in the early years of the kingdom, Sheng-chien was the major Buddhist figure propagating Buddhism at the court of the Western Ch'in, supported by Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen (385–387) and probably also by the next ruler, Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei (388–412), at least to around 406 (the T'ai-ch'u 太初 era: 388–406). At this time, the capital of the Western Ch'in was at Yüan ch'uan 苑川 or at Chin ch'eng 金城, i.e., the Lan chou area.

Sheng-chien was apparently greatly respected by Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen, the first ruler of Western Ch'in, who ordered him to make translations (according to the *Li-tai san-pao chi*). These translations, which are recorded in later catalogues (Sui and T'ang) as being 14 or 15 individual texts in 24 chüan, may have continued by Sheng-chien into the reign of Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei, as indicated by the excerpt in the *K'ai-yüan shih chiao lu*. In this latter record, the list of titles for the translated sutras (none are extant now) attributed to the Western Ch'in, possibly to Sheng-chien, reveal at least one text translating the "Entering the Dharma World" (Ju-fa-chieh p'in 入法界品) section of the *Hua-yen sutra*. The others appear to be mostly one chüan sutras on various topics, perhaps similar to the collection in the *Sutra of the Wise and Foolish*, which was popular in Central Asia and a little later in Tun-huang. What is interesting is the lack of any texts that seem to deal with prajñā or the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, which were of such consequence to Tao-an, Hui-yüan and others in Eastern Chin.

At least these 15 titles give some indication of Buddhist work under the Western Ch'in during the period of Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen and Ch'ien-kuei in the last decades of the 4th century to early 5th century,

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 517c–518a.

<sup>30</sup> These may be the 15 texts mentioned earlier in the excerpt, where it is also said that the *Lo-mo-chia* was the Entering the Dharma World section (Ju fa chieh p'in 入法界品) of the *Hua-yen ching* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*).

<sup>31</sup> *K'ai-yüan shih-chiao lu*, p. 518a.

ca. 400. It is especially important to see that the "Entering the Dharma World" section of the *Hua-yen sutra* was known and circulating in the Western Ch'in area approximately twenty years earlier than Buddhahadra's 60-ch'üan translation completed in 420 (with the revisions completed in 422) at Chien-k'ang, capital of the Eastern Chin. Though the above list is not as extensive as the sutra translations done under Fu Chien 苻堅 in Ch'ang-an with Tao-an 道安, or by Kumārajīva under Yao Hsing 姚興 in Ch'ang-an, or even under the Former Liang 前涼 in Kansu or later under the Northern Liang 北涼 in Liang chou 涼州 (central Kansu), they nevertheless attest to serious Buddhist activity that puts the Western Ch'in in league with these kingdoms and their sponsorship and support of Buddhism in this period.

### B. Fa-hsien 法顯: *Early Monk Traveler to the Western Regions*

As will become clearer throughout this book, in the early decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century there was considerable travel to and from China by foreign monks and by Chinese monks going to the Western Regions.<sup>32</sup> Records indicate relatively fluid and on-going travel by Buddhist monks, including some famous foreign monks, within Kansu and between the various kingdoms in Kansu and other regions of China. The monks Fa-hsien 法顯, Pao-yün 寶雲, and a number of others in 399/400 A.D. determined to go to India in search of texts. Their enthusiasm to undertake the arduous journey expresses the intense interest in obtaining more texts for China at that time. Also, the route chosen to travel within China interestingly confirms the usage of the East-West passage through the Western Ch'in territory in Kansu, actually using the route south of the Ch'i-lien shan 祁連山 mountains, an alternative to the main Silk Road passage through Ch'in chou 秦州, Chin ch'eng 金城, Ku-tsang 姑臧, and Chang-yeh 張掖 (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2). The opening passage of the *Kao-seng Fa-hsien chuan* 高僧法顯傳 describes Fa-hsien's purpose of going and the beginning of his momentous journey from Ch'ang-an to India around 399 (or 400):

Fa-hsien 法顯. Formerly, when he was in Chang-an, he regretted that the collection of the vinaya was deficient. Thereupon, consequently, in Hung-shih 弘始 second year, cyclic year chi-hai 己亥 (399), [he] together with Hui-ching 慧景, Tao-cheng 道整, Hui-ying 慧應, Hui-wei 慧嵬 and others all agreed to go to India to seek the precepts of the vinaya. They set out in the beginning from Ch'ang-an, passing through Lung 隴 and reached [Ch'i-fu] Ch'ien-kuei's 乾歸 kingdom (Western Ch'in) where they spent the summer retreat. When the summer retreat was completed, they went forward to [T'u-fa] Nü-tan's 僭檀 kingdom (Southern Liang), crossing the Yang-lou shan 養樓山 and reached Ch'ang-yeh garrison (ch'en 鎮). Chang-yeh was in great turmoil and the roads were not passable. The Ch'ang-yeh ruler (wang 王)<sup>33</sup> sincerely persuaded them to stay and he would be their *danapati* (donor-patron). Then they met Chih-yen 智嚴, Hui-chien 慧簡, Seng-shao 僧紹, Pao-yün 寶雲, Seng-ching 僧景 and others, and [they] were delighted in having the same determination [to go to India]. They then spent the summer retreat together. When the summer retreat was finished, they again advanced, going to Tun-huang. It has defensive boundaries east to west about 80 *li* and south to north about 40 *li*. They all stayed there for one month and several days. Fa-hsien, etc. (five persons) followed an emissary and left first, separating from Pao-yün and the others. The Tun-huang t'ai-shou 敦煌太守 (governor) Li Hao 李浩<sup>34</sup> supplied [them] with all the necessities to cross the desert ...<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 14 (note 14), 127-131 for some other examples.

<sup>33</sup> The ruler at Ch'ang-yeh was Tuan Yeh 段業 at this time.

<sup>34</sup> Li Kao 李暠, later to be ruler of the Western Liang.

<sup>35</sup> *Kao-seng Fa-hsien chuan*, in *Daizōkyō*, 51 (T 2085), p. 857a.

From this beginning portion of his account, we recognize that the main purpose of Fa-hsien's travel was to obtain texts of the vinaya, which he felt was deficient in China. We also take special note of the route of his departure in China, which went through the territory of the Western Ch'in during the time of Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen. He followed what is called the Ho-hsi Southern Route (河西南路), which, starting in Ch'ang-an, passed over the Lung shan 隴山 to Ho-nan kuo 河南國 (Western Ch'in) and then went further west through the Southern Liang kingdom (in present Ch'ing-hai), passed over the Yang-nü shan 養女山 mountains north of Hsi-ning 西寧, then through the Pien-tu k'ou 扁都口 pass over the Ch'i-lien shan 祁連山 mountains to Chang-yeh 張掖 in central Kansu (see Appendix I and Map 1.2).<sup>36</sup>

After leaving Tun-huang and travelling through the formidable desert for 17 days and about 1,500 *li* Fa-hsien and his group arrived in the Shan-shan kingdom, thus completing the first difficult leg of the Central Asian part of his journey, events of which were discussed and translated in Vol. II.<sup>37</sup> We will have occasion throughout this volume to refer to his descriptions and comments about India, and a subsequent volume will address his important work after his return when he translated texts in Chien-k'ang 建康 under the Eastern Chin and [Liu] Sung.

Another monk traveler a few years later in (Later Ch'in) Hung-shih 弘始 6<sup>th</sup> year (404), Chih-meng 智猛, gathered a group of 15 monks and they all started out from Ch'ang-an to go to India. From his biography we learn that "[Chih-meng] often heard the learned religious persons from foreign countries telling about the land of India having the remaining traces of Śākyamuni. He wondered why China did not have the many vaipulya (Mahāyāna) sutras and he felt strongly about not having them." In the case of Chih-meng, rather than the vinaya, it was the Mahāyāna texts that he wished to search out and bring back to China. Like Fa-hsien, the group started from Ch'ang-an, but went a different route: crossing the Yellow River (probably at Chin-ch'eng, i.e., Lan chou) and going to Liang chou city 涼州城 (Ku-tsang). They left for Shan-shan across the desert from the Yang-kuan 陽關 gate. This route is known as the Ho-hsi lu 河西路 or main route of the Silk Road in and out of China (See Appendix I). In 404 Kumārajīva would have been in Ch'ang-an at the time this group left, and probably Chin ch'eng was under the control of Yao Hsing at that time rather than under the Western Ch'in.

In another notable case, in 420 ([Liu] Sung, Yung-ch'ü 永初 first year), the monk T'an-wu-chieh 曇無竭 together with other monks and disciples, altogether 25 persons, inspired by Fa-hsien's example of walking to the land of Śākyamuni, left for the Western Regions from Ch'ang-an. According to his biography,<sup>38</sup> they went first to Ho-nan kuo 河南國 (Western Ch'in, which at that time was ruled by Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an), then to "Hai-hsi chün 海西郡" (probably Hsi-hai chün 西海郡). From Hsi-hai chün they took what is known as the Chü-yen lu 居延路 (after the Chü-yen lü chou 居延綠洲 oasis in the Yin shan 陰山 foothills where this passage begins) and reached Kao-ch'ang 高昌 (Turfan) on the Northern Silk Road (Fig. 1.2).<sup>39</sup>

These three cases show the purposes of the Chinese monks for traveling to the Western Regions in ca. 400, 404 (for texts on the vinaya and for the vaipulya) and later in 420 (to follow in the footsteps of Fa-hsien to the land of Śākyamuni). They also provide documentation concerning three of the main communication routes through Kansu during the time of the Western Ch'in. Further, it is clear that

<sup>36</sup> Ch'i Ch'en-chün, Lu Ch'ing-feng and Kuo Feng, *Wu-Liang shih-lüeh*, Lan chou, 1988, p. 166. Hereafter: *Wu-Liang shih-lüeh*.

<sup>37</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 127, 724-726.

<sup>38</sup> See full translation of T'an-wu-chieh's biography from the *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 3, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, pp. 338b-339a, in Chapter 6, section II.A.2.c.16a) below.

<sup>39</sup> *Wu-Liang shih-lüeh*, pp. 166-167.



the Western Ch'in was a leading area involved with the fluid and lucrative transportation between China, Central Asia and the West during an unsettled but nevertheless vigorous and active period for the Kansu area, particularly with respect to the transmission of Buddhism and all its ramifications for society, politics, ideas and art.

### C. Hsüan-kao 玄高 : Famous Meditation Monk

During the prosperous period of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (412-428), some famous monks, both Chinese and foreign, are known to have come to Western Ch'in. At this time the capital was at Fu-han 枹罕 (near Ping-ling ssu) and the territory of the Western Ch'in reached its maximum, including Hsi-p'ing, Fu-han, Yüan ch'uan, and the T'ien-shui area, that is, from the borders of the Northern Liang kingdom (then in central Kansu) in the west to most of the Lung-hsi 隴西 region in the east around T'ien-shui 天水, which has the cave temples of Mai-chi shan 麥積山. Some of the famous monks of the time are mentioned in the biography of the monk Hsüan-kao 玄高 in the *Kao-seng chuan* (ca. 530), and some are noted in the inscriptions in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu discussed below. The biography of Hsüan-kao is elucidating and important in considering this period. In fact, the whole life history of Hsüan-kao is a remarkable mirror of the character and events in much of northern China, including Kansu, in the first half of the 5th century.

The opening portion of the biography of Hsüan-kao relates his early training, including his study and meditation training with the renowned monk Buddhahadra (Fu-t'o-p'o-t'o 浮駄跋陀) in Ch'ang-an, and his travels to Western Ch'in, where he stayed for a time at Mai-chi shan near T'ien-shui in eastern Kansu. There he distinguished himself in his meditation practice and acquired disciples. Though the biography is concerned primarily with the specific events surrounding Hsüan-kao, it also sheds some light on the state of Buddhist affairs in the Western Ch'in. We learn about several famous Buddhist masters who were also in Western Ch'in and at Mai-chi shan, which appears to have been a well-known retreat location by the time of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (412-428).<sup>40</sup> Considering the importance of this biography, the entire early portion of the entry in the *Kao-seng chuan* is translated here.<sup>41</sup>

Shih Hsüan-kao's surname was Wei 魏, his given name was Ling-yü 靈育, and he was from Wan-nien 萬年 in P'ing-i 馮翊 (Shensi province, northeast of Ch'ang-an on the Lo River). His mother's family name was K'ou 寇 and she believed in other religions (wai tao 外道 i.e., religions other than Buddhism). In the beginning she married into the Wei family and she first became pregnant with a girl child, who is [Hsüan]-kao's elder sister. When she [the sister] was born, then she believed in Buddha. Then she prayed for her mother, wishing that her family would strongly honor the Dharma. In [Later] Ch'in's Hung-shih 弘始 3<sup>rd</sup> year (401) the mother in her dream saw a foreign monk (fan-seng 梵僧) scattering flowers and filling up the room. When she awoke she realized she had become pregnant. In the 4<sup>th</sup> year (402), 2<sup>nd</sup> month, 8<sup>th</sup> day, she gave birth to a male child. Inside the house suddenly there was [the smell of] unusual incense and light illuminated the walls until morning, and then it extinguished. Because the child was born with auspicious omens, his mother named him Ling-yü 靈育 (spiritual growth). At that time people considered him to be important, and so called him "shih kao" 世高. At age 12 he requested permission from his parents to enter the mountains. For a long time this [request] was not allowed. One day there was a scholarly person (shu sheng 書生) who stayed overnight at [Hsüan]-kao's house. He said that he wished to enter Chung-ch'ang

<sup>40</sup> Mai-chi shan was founded in the reign of Yao Hsing of Later Ch'in (r. 393-416). See details in Chapter 9.

<sup>41</sup> The latter part of the biography, which covers Hsüan-kao in P'ing ch'eng [northern Shansi] under the Northern Wei, will be included in a subsequent volume.

shan<sup>42</sup> 中常山 mountain and live there as a recluse. The father and mother then entrusted [Hsüan]-kao to him. That evening all of the village people collectively sacrificed to the spirits of the road for his journey. The following morning the village people came to greet (asking after) [Hsüan]-kao. His father and mother said, “Yesterday we all sent him off together. How is it that you are now searching for him?” All the village people said, “We did not know that he went. How can you say we already sent him off?” Then the parents realized that the person they sent off the previous day (with Kao) was a spiritual being.

When [Hsüan]-kao first arrived at the mountain he immediately wanted to be a monk. The mountain monk would not yet allow him, saying, “Your parents do not understand the Dharma, so you cannot cross-over (i.e., you cannot be enlightened).” Kao therefore temporarily returned home and explained about searching into the Tao (i.e., Buddhism). Passing through [the explanations] lasted about 20 days, then he completed his previous wishes. [He] already had turned his back on custom and discarded the world, so he changed his name to be Hsüan-kao. He was highly talented and was born to understand and to learn without difficulty. When he was 15 years old he became a mountain monk teaching the dharma. He received the precepts and afterwards concentrated on refining dhyānā (meditation) and the vinaya. Then he heard that the dhyānā master Fu-t’o-p’o-t’o 浮駄跋陀 (Buddhabhadra)<sup>43</sup> was in kuan-chung (i.e., Ch’ang-an) at the Shih-yang ssu 石羊寺 propagating the Dharma. [Hsüan]-kao went [there] and took him as his teacher. Within 10 days he subtly penetrated the dhyānā Dharma. [Fu-t’o]-p’o-t’o sighed happily saying, “Good, excellent! you Buddha’s son. You [will] be able to be deeply enlightened like this.” At this, with humble appearance, he declined to be his teacher.

[Hsüan]-kao then urgently went to Western Ch’in 西秦 and lived in seclusion at Mai-chi shan 麥積山.<sup>44</sup> There were 100-some persons studying at the mountain. They venerated [Hsüan-kao’s] theory and received his training in meditation. At that time there was [at Mai-chi shan] the Ch’ang-an 長安 sha-men Shih T’an-hung 釋曇弘. [Also] eminent monks of Ch’in land (Ch’in ti 秦地) lived in seclusion at the mountain. [They all] met together with [Hsüan]-kao and, because of the same karma, they became good friends. At this time Ch’i-fu Chih-p’an (r. 412-428) controlled the territory (lit. “straddled”) between Lung-hsi 隴西 and Liang land (Liang tu 涼土) in the west. There was a foreign country’s meditation master (ch’an shih 禪師), T’an-wu-pi 曇無毘, who came to this country (i.e., Western Ch’in). [He] led his followers, established a group, and instructed [them] in the meditation method (ch’an tao 禪道). However, [Hsüan-kao already had] samādhi (san-mei 三昧) correctly received that was deep and subtle. Among the monks of Lung-yu 隴右 (i.e., Lung-hsi) those who understood it were few. [Hsüan]-kao then himself wanted to lead the group [of monks] and accordingly follow [T’an-wu]-pi and receive his teaching. Within 10 days, however, T’an-wu-pi changed his mind (i.e., he changed his plans and apparently left the region, as indicated further on in the text)...<sup>45</sup>

Here it becomes clear that the period when Hsüan-kao was at Mai-chi shan was when it was under the Western Ch’in during the period of Ch’i-fu Chih-p’an (412-428).<sup>46</sup> At that time Mai-chi shan was a

<sup>42</sup> Probably the mountains south of Ch’ang-an, usually called Chung shan.

<sup>43</sup> The *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Buddhabhadra, one of the most important translators of the early 5th century, is translated in full in Chapter 6, section I.A.1.a.iii.b). Buddhabhadra came to Ch’ang-an during the time Kumārajīva was there. He became a noted teacher, but was expelled from Ch’ang-an apparently by the officials under the influence of the monks surrounding Kumārajīva. He was invited to Lu shan by Hui-yüan, who tried to have the expulsion rescinded. According to Tsukamoto, Buddhabhadra probably left Ch’ang-an around 411 or 412, arriving at Lu shan around 412. He stayed there and translated some texts, then a year later moved on to Chien-k’ang (capital of Eastern Chin, present Nanking), where he translated such important texts as the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* (probably) and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Hua-yen ching*).

<sup>44</sup> The date was apparently ca. 417 A.D. or a little earlier. At this time Ch’ang-an was being attacked by the forces of Liu Yü of Eastern Chin and the collapse of the Later Ch’in was immanent.

<sup>45</sup> Biography of Hsüan-kao, *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 11, in *Daizōkyō*, 50, (T 2059), pp. 397a-b.

<sup>46</sup> From the historical accounts discussed in the history section, it appears that the T’ien-shui area came under the control of Ch’i-fu Chih-p’an around 417. Prior to that it was under Yao Hsing of Later Ch’in. Chih-p’an sent his general T’an-ta to Shang-kuei (the garrison fort near T’ien-shui) in the 4<sup>th</sup> month of 416 in order to attack Yao I, whom he

famous retreat that drew notable monks, such as the eminent monk (fa-shih 法師), T'an-hung 曇弘 from Ch'ang-an.<sup>47</sup> Also, it is mentioned that about 100-some monks from the Lung-yu (Lung-hsi) region were in training there. The foreign monk and meditation master T'an-wu-pi 曇無毘 came to Mai-chi shan at that time with his followers training in meditation. Later in the same biography, it states that T'an-wu-pi left Mai-chi shan and returned "west to live among the foreigners (she i 舍夷)." From this statement, we can surmise that T'an-wu-pi (in what may have been a rivalry with Hsüan-kao, who perhaps had the superior meditation capabilities) was the one who "changed his mind" and decided to leave Mai-chi shan. As has been frequently cited, in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu in Cave 169 there is a painting of T'an-wu-pi as the first figure in a line of donors in the Group 6 wall painting, which is dated by inscription to 424 (or 420).<sup>48</sup> Besides the record of his stay at Mai-chi shan as indicated in Hsüan-kao's biography, this painting is a rare testimony to T'an-wu-pi's connection with prominent Western Ch'in donors included in the Group 6 painting (with their portraits and name colophons). It also indicates his probable presence at Ping-ling ssu around 424. The 424 date of the Group 6 inscription generally upholds a date for T'an-wu-pi's sojourn in Mai-chi shan (and hence that of Hsüan-kao), which may have been slightly earlier, before T'an-wu-pi acquired the title of "National Master" that is included in the Cave 169 Group 6 colophon.

The *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Hsüan-kao continues, relating an incident of two jealous, unscrupulous and self-serving monks who were in Ho-nan<sup>49</sup> at this time and who purposefully slandered Hsüan-kao and involved the Western Ch'in king, Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, and Man 曼, Chih-pan's eldest son (by a concubine). This incident results in Hsüan-kao's expulsion by the king of Ho-nan (i.e., Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an) to Lin-yang-t'ang shan 林陽堂山 with 300 followers, some of whom are from Lung-yu. The monk Hsüan-shao 玄紹, is singled out and mentioned as a miracle-working monk from Hsüan-kao's followers who later returned to T'ang-shu shan 堂術山 (Ping-ling ssu), where he died.

... At that time there were two monks in Ho-nan 河南 (Western Ch'in). Although their appearance was that of sha-men (monks), they were interested in power. [They] gave reign to their passions, deviated from the vinaya, and hated the studious monks. T'an-wu-pi had already returned to the west to lead a peaceful life.<sup>50</sup> These two monks then went to Ho-nan king's prince (shih-tzu 世子) Man 曼.<sup>51</sup> They slandered and implicated Hsüan-kao, saying that he was gathering followers and ordinary people and was about to be a

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defeated. Later, Chih-p'an attacked Shang-kuei again in 417. At that time Yao I defected to Chih-p'an, who made Yao I governor of Ch'in chou. In 418 Yao I rebelled. T'an-ta became governor of Ch'in-chou from Nan-an. So the Mai-chi shan area would have been secured for the Western Ch'in by 417 and remained so until ca. 428, the end of Chih-pan's reign.

<sup>47</sup> It is likely that he was leaving Ch'ang-an during the years of turmoil there, ca. 418-420, a date which is indicated for the stay of Hsüan-kao at Mai-chi shan as well (see below). T'an-hung went on to Ch'eng-tu (Szechwan), as stated later in the biography, from where he made the arduous 1,000 *li* trip from Ch'eng-tu to the court of the Western Ch'in in Fu-han expressly to clear Hsüan-kao's name from slander.

<sup>48</sup> This date is discussed below in detail in Chapter 7, section I.A.2.a.ii.

<sup>49</sup> Ho-nan in this case appears to refer to Ho-nan kuo, i.e., Ch'i-fu's Western Ch'in. Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei called himself Ho-nan wang, and this title descended to his son, Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an. Also, from the passage above on Sheng-chien, Western Ch'in is specifically called Ho-nan kuo. Although there is a Ho-nan chün during Eastern Chin 東晉 in the area of present Honan province near Hupei, this was always called a "chün" 郡 and not a "kuo" 國.

<sup>50</sup> Hsia-i 舍夷 is ambiguous; perhaps it is a place or simply means to retire or to return to his foreign land.

<sup>51</sup> The king of Ho-nan refers to the ruler of Western Ch'in. Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei was called the king of Ho-nan and Chih-p'an continued the title. Prince Man is the first son of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, but by a concubine. Ch'i-fu Mu-mo, who succeeded Chih-p'an, was Chih-pan's second son.



national calamity. [Prince] Man believed the slander and then wanted to kill [Hsüan-kao]. His father<sup>52</sup> did not allow [this]. Then he [Chih-p'an] expelled [Hsüan]-kao to Ho-pei 河北 (north of the Yellow River) Lin-yang-t'ang shan 林陽堂山.<sup>53</sup> The *Shan ku-lao hsiang chuan* 山古老相傳 (Record of the Ancient and Old Stories of the Mountain) says that this [mountain] is the dwelling of a group of immortals. [Hsüan]-kao had 300 followers and he went and lived in a hut in that mountain. The spiritual feelings that arose in him were self-possessed and his meditation wisdom was completely new. His loyalty and sincerity were deepened [and there was] much that was supernaturally unusual. The ch'ing 磬 (musical instrument like a stone plate) made a sound even before it was struck. Incense also naturally had its own energy (ch'i 氣). Accordingly, real immortals came and went, fierce and wild beasts became tame and humble, and insect's poison did not harm. Among [Hsüan]-kao's studying followers there were 100 some who mastered (yu-jen 遊刃) the Six Gates (liu-men 六門). There was a person called Hsüan-shao 玄紹 from Ch'in chou 秦州 Lung-hsi 隴西. He studied various meditations, and supernatural powers came naturally to him. If he pointed his hand, then water came out; he offered [this] to [Hsüan]-kao to wash his feet and rinse his mouth. This water was fragrant and pure, very different from the usual. Every time [he] obtained this non-worldly flower fragrance he dedicated it to the three jewels. There were eleven others who performed the supernatural and unusual like [Hsüan]-shao. [Hsüan]-shao later went to T'ang-shu shan 堂術山 (i.e., Ping-ling ssu) and, like a cicada casting off his skin, he passed away ...<sup>54</sup>

Hsüan-kao was later exonerated by the king of Ho-nan (i.e., Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an) through the intervention of the eminent monk T'an-hung 曇弘, who had become Hsüan-kao's friend when they were both at Mai-chi shan earlier. After leaving Mai-chi shan, T'an-hung had travelled to Szechwan and from Ch'eng-tu he went back to Ho-nan kuo (Western Ch'in), 1,000 *li* distant, expressly to free Hsüan-kao of the slander that had caused his exile. The king of Ho-nan (Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an) repented and invited Hsüan-kao and gave him the title of National Master. Following this (i.e., "his conversion of Western Ch'in"), Hsüan-kao travelled to "Liang land," which at this time was controlled by the Pei (Northern) Liang 北涼 kingdom, where, as we learn from the Pei Liang section of the *Chin shu*, Hsüan-kao was well received by the ruler, Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜 (r. 401-433).

... Previously, the Ch'ang-an Dharma master T'an-hung had travelled down to the Min mountains [of northwest] Shu (Szechwan) and followed the Hsia 洽 River to Ch'eng-tu. Because of T'an-hung's high reputation, the king of Ho-nan (i.e., Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an) sent an emissary inviting him. [T'an]-hung had already heard that Hsüan-kao had suffered expulsion. He vowed to desire to state [to the king] his purity [i.e., to clear Hsüan-kao's name]. Then, without regard to the difficulty of the plank road (i.e., the planks used along the precipitous roads in Szechwan), he risked [the danger] and left it up to fate. As soon as he arrived in Ho-nan and the ceremonies of guest and host were finished, [T'an-hung] then told the king saying: "You already have deeply examined and know widely. How can you believe the slander and discard the wise? I hurriedly took to the road, [thinking] several thousand *li* was not [too] far, indeed wishing to offer this one word [to you]." The king and the crown prince (t'ai-tzu 太子)<sup>55</sup> were very ashamed and had regret. Then [the king] sent a messenger to go to [Hsüan]-kao and with humble words to ask forgiveness and request Kao to return to the region (capital). Kao was already tolerant and forgiving in his mind, forgetting anger and following fate. [He] started to want to leave the mountain. In the mountain the grass and trees broke off and falling stones blocked the road. Kao chanted, wishing and saying, "I vow to want to expand the Tao. How can I obtain [this] if the place is obstructed?" Then the wind blew the road open. Gradually,

<sup>52</sup> Presumably Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, Ho-nan wang.

<sup>53</sup> I cannot find this mountain name in the records. It is probably north of the Yellow River in Kansu rather than the Ho-pei that is in northeastern China, which would not make much sense in the context of the biography's narrative.

<sup>54</sup> Biography of Hsüan-kao, *Kao-seng ch'uan*, chüan 11, in *Daizōkyō*, 50, (T 2059), p. 397b.

<sup>55</sup> This is Mu-mo, the crown prince under Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, and different from the king's first son, the "shih-tzu" (prince) Man, by a concubine, who, earlier in the biography had first listened to the two slanderous monks.

he returned to the country (i.e., Western Ch'in). The king and subjects came near the road to greet and welcome him. [Those] inside and outside [the country] recommended him to be a national master (kuo-shih 國師). With the conversion (transformation) of Ho-nan (i.e., Western Ch'in) finished, [Hsüan-kao] went on and travelled to Liang territory (Liang tu 涼土) ...<sup>56</sup>

When Hsüan-kao travelled to Liang territory, the date was doubtless before 433 (date of the death of Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün) and probably before the death of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (428) and the series of disastrous events in the Ch'in chou and Ch'ang-an area around 427-431. By the late 420's the T'o-pa Wei had started their drive to defeat the Ta Hsia and conquer the Shensi area and beyond. Western Ch'in had a devastating earthquake in 429 and Ch'i-fu Mu-mo (r. 428-431) burned his capital and fled with 15,000 of his people towards Shang-kuei, but they got caught at Nan-an in the path of the see-saw fighting between Ta Hsia and T'o-pa Wei in the Ch'in chou area. Ch'i-fu Mu-mo was eventually killed by Ta Hsia in 431, and Ta Hsia fell to T'o-pa Wei the same year (see above I.A.4 for details). It is likely that Hsüan-kao went to Ku-tsang (Wu-wei), capital of the Northern Liang, prior to 429. If so, then he would have been in Ku-tsang for a few years since in 432, while at Ku-tsang, he was invited by Yang-p'ing wang 陽平王 Tu Ch'ao 杜超 (brother of the mother of the T'o-pa Wei emperor Shih-tsu) to return with him to the Wei capital in northern Shansi. Hsüan-kao accepted and went to the Northern Wei capital, P'ing ch'eng 平城, where he became a famous Buddhist teacher and mentor of the crown prince (T'ai-tzu T'o-pa Huang 太子拓跋晃).<sup>57</sup> The final part of the biography of his life and demise at P'ing ch'eng under the Northern [T'o-pa] Wei will be continued and addressed in a subsequent volume.

From the biography of Hsüan-kao one gets a glimpse of the activity of Buddhists in the Western Ch'in region during the second and third decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. We can appreciate that important monks were there, especially at the two famous meditation sites of Ping-ling ssu and Mai-chi shan, the latter having 100 monks studying meditation. T'an-yung came from Ch'ang-an and the foreign monk T'an-wu-pi came with his followers. The Western Ch'in ruler Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an finally honored Hsüan-kao (after a scandal was cleared by T'an-yung) as National Master, and he was respected by Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün, ruler of Northern Liang in central and western Kansu at the time. In Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, a written colophon accompanying the portrait of the most prominent donor monk of the Amitäyus niche (Group 6) dated 424 (or 420) calls T'an-ma [wu]-pi as National Great Meditation Master (Hu-kuo ta-ch'an-shih T'an-ma-pi 護國大禪師曇摩毘),<sup>58</sup> so it is likely he also received this title from Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, probably shortly after the time he was at Mai-chi shan.

Not only do we see the involvement of the court and ruler of Western Ch'in with the affairs of the most notable Buddhist monks (concerning the incident of the slander of Hsüan-kao by two monks), but we learn that certainly one of the most important factors in the training of monks is the practice in meditation. The text specifically states that 100 monks were in meditation at Mai-chi shan. Time and again in this biography the practice of meditation predominates. When Hsüan-kao was in exile at Lin-yang-t'ang shan he had 300 followers, 100 of whom had mastered the "six gates" and some, like Hsüan-shao, had miraculous powers. For Hsüan-kao's generation (unlike that of Fa-hsien), the translations of Kumārajīva were completed prior to their mature years. These translations offered a

<sup>56</sup> Biography of Hsüan-kao, *Kao-seng ch'uan*, chüan 11, in *Daizōkyō*, 50, (T 2059), p. 397b.

<sup>57</sup> Huang and Ho (1987), p. 308.

<sup>58</sup> See below, Chapter 7, section I.2.b.i.

rich variety of texts written in clear, literary Chinese, so the need for further translations may not have seemed as urgent as in the time of Fa-hsien's travels to India starting in ca. 400 or at the time of Hui-yüan (at Lu shan in the south) in the 390's when he sent Chih Fa-ling in 393 to Central Asia in search of Buddhist texts.<sup>59</sup> Further text translations were to follow in the 420's from the capital in South China under the [Liu] Sung, and were also being produced from the area of the Northern Liang in Kansu, particularly from 414 to 420 under Dharmakṣema. As we shall encounter later in this volume and subsequent ones, these were to effect Buddhist art as early as the 420's.

Hsüan-kao represents the intense concern for many monks of his generation in the practices of meditation, a factor also part of Hui-yüan's (d. 416) practice and legacy in the South. It is probably accurate to surmise that the interest in meditation practice intensified during the period ca. 400-430 and that Mai-chi shan and Ping-ling ssu were an important part of this movement in the Kansu area of northwest China. This point will become clearer in the chapters ahead, but the biography of Hsüan-kao affords a written witness that shows this tendency at that time.

#### D. Hui-lan 慧覽: *Later Monk Traveler to the Western Regions*

The biography of the monk Hui-lan 慧覽 adds interesting confirmation of and some new elements to the historical factors already indicated by the biographies of Sheng-chien, Fa-hsien and Hsüan-kao. Hui-lan, who comes from Chiu-ch'üan 酒泉 (western Kansu), seems to have been born ca. 400 A.D., around the time that Fa-hsien was traveling through that area from Chang-yeh to Tun-huang ca. 400-401. Also he would have been about the same age as Hsüan-kao (born 402), so they are of the same generation. In many ways, the life of Hsüan-kao and Hui-lan are paradigms of some of the important Buddhist monks in China whose early years of training fall around 415-420, a generation later than Sheng-chien and Fa-hsien. Hui-lan became one of the famous meditation monks along with Hsüan-kao (possibly in the same circle with Hsüan-kao at Mai-chi shan, but this is not certain). Hui-lan, like Fa-hsien earlier, traveled to the Western Regions, though only as far as Chi-pin 罽賓 (Gandhāra)<sup>60</sup> and on his return to China spent his last years in the South rather than in the North under the T'o-pa Wei as did Hsüan-kao.

Shih Hui-lan 釋慧覽. His surname was Ch'eng 成. He was a Chiu-ch'üan (Kansu) person. When he was young, together with Hsüan-kao 玄高 [both] were famous in silent visualization (chi-kuan 寂觀). [Hui]-lan traveled to the Western Regions. He put the Buddha's [alms] bowl on his head.<sup>61</sup> Then at Chi-pin 罽賓

<sup>59</sup> Chih-Fa-ling returned in 408 A.D. "with many Sanskrit manuscripts." Z. Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, 2 vols. New York, 1985, I, p. 398.

<sup>60</sup> From the work of Kuwayama, it is seen that for this period of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century the designation "Chi-pin" refers to the greater Gandhāra area, including Swat, Taxila, Peshawar, and the Afghan area of Haḍḍa. S. Kuwayama, "Pilgrimage Route Changes and the Decline of Gandhāra," in P. Brancaccio and K. Behrendt, eds., *Gandhāran Buddhism, Archaeology, Art, Texts*, Toronto and Vancouver, UBC Press, 2006, pp. 107-134. Also, S. Kuwayama, "Literary Evidence for Dating the Colossi in Bāmiyān," in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, ed. by E. Curaverunt, G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Rome, IsMEO, LVI, Vol. 2, 1987, pp. 703-727. Recently, Li Ch'ung-feng has noted that the so-called "Chi-pin" (Jibin) route divided at Bolur with one branch going southeast to Kashmir and another going southwest into the region of Swat. Li Ch'ung-feng, "The Geography of Transmission: The 'Jibin' Route and the Propagation of Buddhism in China," in *Kizil On the Silk Road: Crossroads of Commerce and Meeting of Minds*, ed. Rajeshware Ghose, Mumbai, 2008, p. 28.

<sup>61</sup> Probably at Kashgar (Sha-lo), which is where Kumārajīva saw it and also put the bowl on his head. See Kumārajīva's biography: Rhie (2002), p. 390.

(Gandhāra) from the monk Ta-mo 達摩 (or Mo-ta 摩達) he received the essential method of meditation (ch'an-yao 禪要). Ta-mo (or Mo-ta) once entered into samādhi (ting 定) and went (wang 往) to Tuṣita Heaven 兜率天. From Mi-lo 彌勒 (Maitreya) [Ta-mo] received the P'u-sa chieh 菩薩戒 (Bodhisattva precepts). Later [Ta-mo] gave [Hui]-lan the chieh-fa 戒法 (the *pratimokṣa* rules).<sup>62</sup> [Hui]-lan returned to Yü-tien 于填 (Khotan) and also gave various monks at that place the chieh-fa. Later he returned [to China]. Along the way in Ho-nan 河南 (south of the Yellow River), the Ho-nan T'u-yü-hun 河南吐谷渾 Mu-yen 慕延 [Mu Li-yen 慕利延]’s prince (shih-tzu 世子), Ch'üung 瓊 and others heard about [Hui]-lan’s reputation and his virtue. [Prince Ch'üung] sent emissaries with capital and assets and ordered Shu 蜀 (Szechwan) to establish the Tso-chün ssu 左軍寺. [Hui]-lan then settled down in this monastery. Later he moved to the T'ien-kung ssu 天宮寺 at Lo-[fu] 羅[浮]. [Liu] Sung Wen-[ti] (r. 424-452) requested [Hui]-lan to come to the capital (Chien-k'ang) and stay at Chung shan’s 鍾山 Ting-lin ssu 定林寺. [Emperor] Hsiao-wu 孝武 (r. 452-464) built the Chung-hsing ssu 中興寺. Again by imperial order [Hui]-lan moved and stayed there. In the capital the meditation monks all followed him and received the method of the Buddhist path from him (yeh 業). Wu-hsing’s 吳興 Ch'en-yen 沈演 and P'ing-ch'ang’s 平昌 Meng-i 孟顗 both respected his virtue and made (a) meditation room(s) for the temple. During [Liu] Sung Ta-ming 大明 (457-464), he died at age 60 some.<sup>63</sup>

Hui-lan was known early on as a master of “silent visualization”, together with Hsüan-kao (possibly literally together, such as at Mai-chi shan, but there is no way to tell from the text). However, Hui-lan decided to go to the Western Regions, where he saw the relic of the Buddha’s alms bowl and put it on his head (as had Kumārajīva). From the monk Ta-mo [Mo-ta] in Chi-pin (Gandhāra) Hui-lan received both the ch'an-yao (essential method) and the chieh-fa (part of the vinaya). The monk Ta-mo had gone to Tuṣita Heaven in samādhi where he met Maitreya and received the Bodhisattva precepts directly from Maitreya. Such a notable occurrence must have made a profound impact at the time, especially on Mahāyāna monks for whom the Bodhisattva vows are a distinguishing Mahāyāna feature. It is certainly an affirmation of the presence of Mahāyāna in Gandhāra at this time and the way by which the great Mahāyāna monks could receive their Mahāyāna vows of the Bodhisattva. The date is probably sometime around 425-430. Since Hui-lan received the chieh-fa (part of the vinaya) with Ta-mo, who had not only seen Maitreya in samādhi, but also received the Bodhisattva vows directly from Maitreya, Hui-lan would also be endowed with a special fame for his relation with Ta-mo. This passage is a reflection of the intense interest in Maitreya at this time in the Western Regions, as it was also in China, especially in Kansu.

When Hui-lan returned to China, he went via the Southern Silk Road through Khotan and then through the T'u-yü-hun territory in Ch'ing-hai (the Ch'ing-hai lu; see Appendix I), south of the Ch'i-lien mountains and then proceeded south to Szechwan (Fig. 1.2) where a temple was built for him by funds supplied by Prince Ch'üung of the T'u-yü-hun. Hui-lan resided there but later moved to the T'ien-kung ssu at Lo-fu. Still later, at the order of [Liu] Sung emperor Wen-ti, he went to the Sung capital and stayed at the famous Ting-lin ssu. When Emperor Hsiao-wen made the Chung-hsing ssu he ordered Hui-lan to stay there. The meditation monks of the capital followed Hui-lan and received teaching from him. Several well-known persons who respected Hui-lan made meditation rooms for the temple. He died in the 457-464 era at age 60 some.

<sup>62</sup> One of the four divisions of the chieh-lü 戒律 (vinaya); the *pratimokṣa* rules for the method for (confessing violation of) monastic precepts.

<sup>63</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 11, *Daizōkyō*, 50, p. 399a.

Unlike Hsüan-kao, who went to the T'o-pa Wei in North China and there became caught in the Taoist-Confucian conspiracy leading up to the great Buddhist persecution of 446-452 that took his life, in contrast, Hui-lan led a distinguished and well supported life until age 60-some in the capital of the [Liu] Sung in Chien-k'ang. The latter part of Hui-lan's life reflects the differences encountered between South China compared with the North under the T'o-pa Wei in the later years of the generation of "meditation monks" trained in the 410's and 420's in the Kansu area. In addition, these biographies seem to clearly reveal the mobility of Buddhist monks between the various regions of China, despite the fragmented conditions and political turmoil of the times.

### *E. Concluding Comments*

Conditions in Ch'ang-an had a particularly significant effect in the eastern and southern parts of the Kansu region. The turmoil at the end of the Later Ch'in from ca. 416-419 followed by the unsympathetic regime of Ho-lien Po-po from 419 and its collapse beginning from ca. 427 under the attacks of the T'o-pa Wei doubtless allowed the Western Ch'in to advance their territories eastwards at least as far as T'ien-shui without much hindrance from ca. 417. The kingdom reached its greatest extent from ca. 417-428 in the reign of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an at a time when Ch'ang-an was weak. The political conditions in Ch'ang-an also affected the Buddhist activities in that city which had, only a few years before, been a hub of enormous Buddhist activity during the reign of Yao Hsing from ca. 400-416, and especially from ca. 402 with Kumārajīva heading the greatest translation project ever seen in China sponsored by Yao Hsing. By ca. 416 there may have been a large movement of prominent Buddhists away from Ch'ang-an, some to the Western Ch'in. That is certainly the case for T'an-yung, the eminent monk (fa-shih), and Hsüan-kao, who was still a young man in his teens and early 20's during the period of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an. Born in 402, if Hsüan-kao left Ch'ang-an when it was experiencing its most serious troubles in 418, he would have been 14. It is not known when he reached Mai-chi shan, but presumably sometime before 424, the approximate date of the painting of T'an-ma [wu]-pi (who came to Mai-chi shan when Hsüan-kao was there) in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu. At some point T'an-yung left Mai-chi shan and went to Szechwan (returning to Western Ch'in to help release Hsüan-kao from imposed exile by the king of Ho-nan). After Hsüan-kao's vindication and honoring by Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (d. 428), he traveled further west to Pei (Northern) Liang, where he was honored by Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün. In 432, before Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün's death in 433, Hsüan-kao went to P'ing-ch'eng, capital of the T'o-pa Wei.

These events probably had some effect on the Buddhist art of the Western Ch'in. With Ch'ang-an under duress from ca. 416 to the early 420's in particular, it is likely that Buddhists and the makers of Buddhist art may have migrated to other regions, including Western Ch'in, where the circumstances were more favorable. Certainly at this time Western Ch'in was experiencing its most flourishing Buddhist period. Artistic influences from the Ch'ang-an area were probably current throughout most of the Western Ch'in period, but may have increased in the period of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an. The extent of possible influences from the South is an interesting question, and one which will be addressed in the art section below. From the written records it is clear that the South was engaged to a certain degree with the activities in Szechwan and Kansu, and that Buddhist monks were inclined to travel to the South from the Kansu area, perhaps more than to the North in the Sixteen Kingdoms period.



## CHAPTER TWO

### BRONZE BUDDHA ALTAR FROM CHING-CH'UAN

Some of the finest and most important Buddhist art of the Sixteen Kingdoms period comes from the area of eastern and southern Kansu, largely under the control of the Western Ch'in, ruled by the ethnic Hsien-pi Ch'i-fu clan whose rulers, as seen from the records, appear to have been favorable to Buddhism. Records also describe important monks in the region and their keen interest in acquiring texts from the Western Regions and in meditation practices. These factors, detailed in the history and Buddhist activities section in Chapter 1, interrelate with and inform what we can see of the remains of art from this time and region, which are mainly from cave temple sites, with the exception of one superb bronze Buddha altar from Ching-ch'uan 涇川 near An-ting 安定 (Fig. 1.1). This bronze altar is an especially rare and significant example of its kind. It is discussed here with the specific intention of determining its date and studying its relation to the broader issues of this genre as presented in Volumes I and II regarding the bronze images from the southern and northern regions in China (other than Kansu).

#### I. INTRODUCTION

In 1976 the bronze Buddha altar with canopy and four-footed stand in Figs. 2.1a-d and color Pl. I was discovered in Ching-ch'uan hsien 涇川縣 near the city of An-ting in eastern Kansu (Fig. 1.1).<sup>1</sup> This altar ensemble is important on many accounts, but especially as the only known image of this kind yet known from the Kansu region. It is currently part of the collection of the Ching-ch'uan hsien wen-hua kuan 涇川縣文華館 and is sometimes kept in the Kansu Provincial Museum (Kansu sheng po-wu-kuan) in Lan chow. The total height of the ensemble is 19 cm [7.48 in.]; the Buddha is 8.5 cm [3.34 in.] in height and the parasol (canopy) is 14 cm [5.5 in.] in diameter. It was found together with other bronze objects that had been put into two bronze bowls which were hooked together to make a container for the objects and then buried in the ground.<sup>2</sup> Another especially interesting object among

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<sup>1</sup> Ching-ch'uan hsien was on the main transportation route between central China and the northwest since the Ch'in (220–206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) periods. Now it is close to the border of Kansu and Shensi provinces (Fig. 1.1). The area along the Ching River 涇河 is said to have many ancient historical sites and artifacts. Liu Yü-lin, Ching-ch'uan hsien wen-hua-kuan, and P'ing-liang ti-ch'ü po-wu-kuan, "Kansu Ching-ch'uan hsien fa-hsien i-p'i Hsi Ch'in chiao ts'ang wen-wu" (A Comment on the Discovery in Ching-ch'uan hsien of a Western Ch'in Hoard of Cultural Artifacts), *Wen-wu tzu-liao ts'ung-k'an*, 1983, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> According to the initial article on this find (see note 2.1), when member(s) of the T'ai-yang tun ta tui 太陽墩大隊 group of the Yü-tu kung-she 玉都公社 company were clearing land to make a field on the high loess plateau about 10 km directly north of Ching-ch'uan city, a small hoard of bronze items was discovered by an official worker. The objects in the hoard had been buried about one meter below the surface of the ground. Nothing else was discovered nearby. At the time of the discovery, the worker had found two rather large bronze bowls that were connected together and had other objects inside. Altogether there were ten objects, all bronze, including the two large bowls where the items had been deposited. The exact way in which the items were placed inside the two bowls is not clear now. The two large bowls (Dia. 33.5 cm; Dia. 12.5 cm) were very similar in form with everted rim, deep bowl and flat bottom. The base of one had relatively thick traces of soot and some traces of repair (Liu (1983), fig. 1). The other eight items that were in the bowls

the items is a bronze seal with the hand grip in the form of a recumbent horse and with the seal characters “kuei-i-hou yin” 歸義侯印 carved on the bottom (Fig. 2.25). This seal, its possible identity, its relevance in regard to the bronze Buddha altar and to the circumstances of the burial of the hoard will be discussed below. First, however, we need to independently examine the altar and assess its dating and probable provenance, after which the issues of the official seal, its identity and date, as well as the factors of the location of the burial will be undertaken. Because burials often contain objects made considerably earlier than the time of the actual burial, each object needs to be independently assessed for its date. The date of any object in the buried hoard does not necessarily fix the date of the burial, but only establishes an earliest possible date for the burial. In this case, even if the date of this burial could be established, it does not necessarily date this Buddha altar ensemble. The dating of the objects and the dating of the burial are two separate issues. This bronze altar is small and could have been brought to the Ching-ch’uan (An-ting) area from elsewhere, or it may have been made in the same area. It is, however, stylistically different in a number of ways from the small bronze Buddha altars from the Hopei or Northeastern region, though it is of the same general genre.<sup>3</sup> However, to make some assessments regarding the probable provenance and to establish the most likely date of the image irrespective of other circumstantial issues that arise from the other objects in the burial, we will first examine in detail the technical and stylistic factors of the ensemble.

## II. TECHNICAL AND STYLISTIC DESCRIPTION AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The altar presently consists of four separate parts: a 4-footed stand, a Buddha seated in dhyāna mudrā on a lion pedestal throne, a mandorla consisting of a round head halo and round body halo, and a dome-shaped canopy with 16 holes equidistant along the circumference of the turned down rim. It is fortunate and rare to be this complete (more complete than most of the surviving small bronze Buddha altars of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century), but there are clear signs of some missing parts: the ornaments attached to the 16 holes of the canopy; the four objects that would have been attached by the staple-shaped lugs on the back of the mandorla (Fig. 2.1d); and an attachment that would have projected from a small hole that appears at each short side at the juncture of the low, raised platform and the upper surface of the four-footed stand (visible in Figs. 2.1b and c). Another small hole appears at the center back where the raised platform holding the separate lion throne seat meets the top of the 4-footed stand (Fig. 1.1d). The function of this hole and the kind of attachment that would have been placed there are not clear.

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are: a smaller bronze bowl with four semicircular ears (Dia. 7.3 cm; Dia. 5.8 cm) which had traces of thick smoke on the outside and a shiny black color inside; three slender bronze bells (H. 10.9 cm, 7.2 cm and 5.5 cm) (Liu (1983), fig. 2); two bronze irons each with wide rim and long handle; the gilt bronze Buddha altar ensemble with canopy, mandorla, and four-legged base (altogether in 4 parts); and a bronze seal (H. 3.3 cm, seal bottom 2.5 x 2.4 cm) with a grip in the form of a recumbent horse and having the characters “kuei-i-hou yin” on the bottom (Fig. 2.25). Liu (1983), p. 74.

There is no indication that this was a tomb of any kind, but rather that these items—utilitarian, ritual and official—were put into the bronze bowls to protect them and were buried without any kind of accompanying items or structure, such as would be the case with burial in a tomb.

<sup>3</sup> The small bronze Buddha sculptures and altar ensembles of the northeast, mainly from Hopei, Shansi and Shensi, were studied in detail in three major phases in Volume II: Phase I (ca. 317-350), Phase II (ca. 350-400) and Phase III (400-ca. 439). Rhie (2002), Chapter 2, primarily pp. 322-363, 415-423, 445-455.

These four separate parts are assembled with the Buddha and throne unit (the Buddha image and the lion throne are cast together) placed on a slightly raised rectangular platform in the center of the upper surface of the 4-footed stand. There is a projecting hollow flange in the center of the low raised rectangular platform onto which the lion throne, which is hollow inside, is positioned.<sup>4</sup> This flange holds the lion throne/Buddha image unit onto the four-footed stand. This is the same technique that is observed in other bronze Buddha altars from the Hopei region, including Figs. 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, and probably 2.11). The undersides of the lion throne/Buddha image unit can be seen in some other published examples.<sup>5</sup> The encompassing mandorla (the combination of the round head halo and the round body halo) has a square cut-away on the lower side in order to fit over the throne in the back (Figs. 2.1b, d). The canopy and the mandorla are secured to the Buddha/throne unit by the canopy pole, which slides through the lug at the top edge of the mandorla and down through the lug from the back of the Buddha figure that projects through a rectangular hole in the center of the mandorla, to finally pass through a lug projection from the center of the top edge of the lion throne (Figs. 2.1c, d and f). Each of these items will be addressed in detail separately below in order to bring out the individual elements in comparison with other images and to arrive at a plausible dating and provenance for the Ching-ch'uan altar.

#### A. *Buddha Image*

The head of the Buddha is proportionately relatively large (Fig. 2.1e). It has a somewhat long, oval shape with a low, but wide, forehead. The uṣṇīṣa is large and globular and without any markings. A plain uṣṇīṣa of this particular shape and proportioning relates most closely with those of the small bronze Buddhas from Hopei dating from Phase II (ca. 350-400) according to the study offered in Volume II.<sup>6</sup> The hairline is rather boldly raised above the forehead plane and has a slight indication of a center part with a notched indentation at the forehead and a few grooves slanted towards a center part. This combination is different from the figures cited in note 6 above, but somewhat akin to the style seen in the Nitta abhayā mudrā bronze Buddha in Fig. 4.19, which may be from Shansi and probably dates ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The features of the Ching-ch'uan Buddha's face are quite distinct; the eyes appear widely opened and have the effect of a rather large upper lid and clear eye socket shape created by the strong indentation below the eyebrows. In their shallowness and shape the eyes are akin to those of the standing Maitreya Bodhisattva in the Ku-kung po-wu-kuan dating ca. 350 (Fig. 2.3).<sup>7</sup> The nose is the type known from the Asian Art Museum seated Buddha dated by inscription to 338 A.D. under the Later Chao 後趙 (319-352) with flared but sharply trimmed nostrils (Fig. 2.2).<sup>8</sup> The mouth has an interestingly full, somewhat pendulant, lower lip that relates to Gupta Indian modes from as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Indian sculpture, and is also seen in the dhyānāsana Buddha of the former Nitta collection dated in Volume II to ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Phase II (Fig. 2.5).<sup>9</sup> The neck is quite short, smoothly curves to the shoulders, and has no markings. The ears (Fig. 2.1f),

<sup>4</sup> Liu (1983), p. 74. This acts as a kind of mortise and tenon technique to join the Buddha/lion throne to the slightly raised platform on the top of the four-footed stand.

<sup>5</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.28e and 2.33e.

<sup>6</sup> For a summary of Phase II altars and other images, see Rhie (2002), pp. 357-363. For examples of the uṣṇīṣa type see figs. 2.18, 2.21, 2.27-2.39, 2.42, 2.45-2.47, 2.49-2.51.

<sup>7</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 318-322 and fig. 2.16.

<sup>8</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 254-260 and figs. 2.2a-i for more complete analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 334-337 and figs. 2.27a-c.



only slightly elongated, are smoothly concave, like a plate, with only a simple, vertical, curved, hook-like, raised ridge in the center—a feature that we will have cause to note later in this book.

The upper body is square and broad with very little differentiation of the limbs beneath the drapery. The body most resembles the blocky form of the Phase II (ca. 350-400) Buddhas (see note 6). It is not as wide nor does it have the sense of a somewhat extended torso shape that slopes a bit from upper chest to mid-section as seen in the early Phase III seated Buddha from I-hsien, Hopei (Fig. 2.10) dated in Volume II to ca. 400 (or early 5<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>10</sup> The shoulders, however, have a smooth contour with the neck, which is enhanced by the fact that the collar-like cowl is presented as a flat band with some wavy incised marks, and does not have a twist that would create a break in the clean curved shape of the contour (Fig. 2.1e). This is a notable feature that relates to the Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku Buddha image of Phase II (Fig. 2.7), though the rendering in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha is bolder and stronger. The shoulders, which have minimum muscular shaping, are not as pronounced as seen in the I-hsien Buddha (Fig. 2.10). The knees and legs, which provide a horizontal base for the squared upper body, are not plain as in the Later Chao period Buddha dated 338 from Phase I (Fig. 2.2), nor are they the curved melon-shape as in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha found in Sian (Fig. 2.4) and dated in Volume II to ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> The rounded shape of the knees in this Ching-ch'uan Buddha is obscured by the heavy, horizontal, parallel, step pleats of the garment that also continue around the sides of the image (Figs. 2.1e, f), a style common to some late Phase II small bronze Buddhas, such as the Buddha in the Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku altar (Fig. 2.7), the Ku-kung po-wu-kuan altar image (Fig. 2.8), and others.<sup>12</sup> This feature also continues into some Phase III small bronze Buddhas (Figs. 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, and 2.14, the latter dated 429).<sup>13</sup>

Similar heavy step folds curve diagonally around the upper arms and fall in a strikingly squared U-shape over the chest of the Ching-ch'uan Buddha (Fig. 2.1e). These are powerful folds that create a distinctively rigid, symmetrical, abstract patterning that is typical of the small bronze Buddhas of Phases I, II and III, though there are subtle differences in each phase. In the Ching-ch'uan image the two parallel U-shaped folds on the chest are sharply squared and have an incised line near the edge. These squared U-shape chest folds match mostly closely with the squared U shapes used in the Hopei Provincial Museum altar image (Fig. 2.8) and Ku-kung Museum altar image (Fig. 2.9), both of ca. late Phase II period. Others in Phase I, II and III tend to be either more rounded or oval in shape and not so radically squared as in these two Hopei altar images and the Ching-ch'uan Buddha. The Phase III Ta Hsia image dated 429 also has radically squared folds (Fig. 2.14), but they are not the type of step fold with incised line near the edge as used in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha and the two altar images cited above. However, the radically squared shape on the 429 image, which comes from Shensi (under the Ta Hsia in that region), could be one indication of a Shensi regional trait, of which the Ching-ch'uan image is an earlier manifestation using the different technique of step fold with incised line that is typical of the later part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 418-420 and fig. 2.64.

<sup>11</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 325-334.

<sup>12</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.46-2.48, 2.65, 2.75-2.78.

<sup>13</sup> Others include: Rhie (2002), figs. 2.75b, 2.76d (dated 426), 2.77.

<sup>14</sup> Recently some questions have been raised regarding the authenticity of the 429 A.D. Ta Hsia image (now in the Ôsaka City Museum) by Mr. Chi Ch'ung-chien 季崇建 in *Chi Ch'ung-chien t'an Chung-kuo fo-hsiang chien-ting* (A Discourse on the Discrimination [Authenticity] of the Sculptures of Chinese Buddha), Taipei, 2002, p. 45. He states the following points concerning this Buddha image "where doubt cannot be resolved." According to him:

- 1) Early images are mostly cast separately, but this one has the pedestal and base cast as one;
- 2) The lines are dull, especially in the hair design and hands, so these do not match the early style;
- 3) The rim sticking out of the trapezoid shoulder of the four-legged stand is eccentric, the "fire-flame" decoration inside the frame is "extremely inadequate," and the dedicatory writing style and method of aligning does not match with the custom of that time;
- 4) The insertion hole(s) for the "flower canopy" (hua kai 華蓋) on the back of the Buddha image exist in name only and do not have any real function (佛像背面的華蓋插口形同虛設).

For these reasons, Mr. Chi regards the "possibility to be great" that this image is a "later person's imitation copy."

In my view, these points made by Mr. Chi are either coming from a misunderstanding or are not so certain as to cast doubt on the authenticity of the 429 Ta Hsia Buddha image:

- 1) The technique of casting the Buddha-throne unit together with the four-footed stand (rather than separately) occurs in the 420's, as detailed in Volume II (Rhie, (2002), pp. 474-488, 851). It is a major technical change that occurred at that time and can also be seen in the bronze Maitreya seated Buddha sculpture dated 423 of the [Liu] Sung (Rhie (2002), fig. 2.82c), in the seated bronze Buddha dated 437 of the [Liu] Sung (fig. 2.15), both of which I consider authentic, and all small extant bronze images thereafter, as far as I know. The 429 A.D. date for the Ōsaka City Museum Buddha fits within the period when this technique appears to have begun.
- 2) The design of the hair with curls on the uṣṇīṣa and slanted lines on both sides of the hair part occur on other small bronze Buddhas of late Phase II and in Phase III (see Rhie (2002), figs. 2.47, 2.64 and 4.28). The hands are simply worn out by touching (as are the lion heads). The position of the hands is suitable for Phase III, and appears in most Phase III seated bronze Buddha images in dhyāna mudrā (Figs. 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.15 here).
- 3) The overhanging rim of the slanted shoulder of the four-footed stand is unusual, and I do not know of another example.

The wave motif (called a "fire-flame" design by Mr. Chi) on the under edge of the top of the four-footed stand is typical of the designs on the four-footed stand of other bronze Buddha altars starting from around 400 A.D. (Figs. 2.10–2.12) when it seems to occur only on the front side. Later, this design is extended to the two sides and even the back, as with the case of the 429 Ta Hsia altar and the 437 altar (Fig. 2.15). Though the style of this motif in the 429 Buddha may appear "extremely inadequate" to Mr. Ch'i, it is not inappropriate for a 429 date. The specific style could be an individual or regional artistic factor.

The dedicatory writing does not appear unusual and in fact contains historical information that would very likely not be known by a forger or copyist of a later period (for more details see the analysis in Rhie (2002), pp. 475-476).

- 4) Mr. Ch'i's phrase "hsing t'ung hsü she" 形同虛設 regarding the holes in the two lugs on the back of the pedestal is an ambiguous statement at best. The question of the two lugs on the back of the throne not being functional for the "flower canopy" is baffling. First of all, it is highly unlikely that this image was originally intended to have a canopy. By the 420's the custom of having a canopy with these small bronze Buddhas appears to have phased out. There are only two lugs on the back of this altar and both are on the pedestal (throne). Since there is no lug on the back of the head, this image did not have a separate head halo, so it must have had a mandorla that included both the head and body haloes and was held to the image by the two lugs. If there were a canopy originally, its pole would have acted as the single pin for the mandorla as well.

However, because of the ambiguity of Mr. Ch'i's comments concerning the functionality of the holes in the two lugs, I contacted the Ōsaka City Museum in the fall of 2007 for clarification concerning the exact status of the lugs. According to Mr. Ryūichi Saitō of the Ōsaka City Museum, regarding the upper lug, there is a hole that penetrates all the way through the lug, but on the lower lug, though there is a hole, it does not penetrate all the way through the lug. I also received a picture of the back of the image clearly showing the holes in the two lugs. (I am grateful to Prof. Junghee Lee and Mr. Masayuki Oshitani for their help in contacting the Ōsaka Museum and Mr. Saitō on my behalf regarding this point). In light of this verbal and photo clarification of the status of the two lugs on the back of this bronze image, it is possible to suggest that a mandorla (and probably not a canopy) for this image was designed to be attached by a long pin or rod that went through the upper lug to the lower lug and the pin or rod may have simply held and rested in the half hole depression of the lower lug, in order to prevent it from slipping through. This is certainly an unusual technique, but the 420's was a period of experimentation and change with regard to the techniques for these small bronze altars. Also, the 429 Buddha could have a regional peculiarity of which we are not yet familiar.

Roderick Whitfield in a recent article ("Early Buddha Images from Hobei", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. LXV, No. 1 (2005), p. 95) commented on the remarks by Mr. Chi on the 429 bronze altar. He interpreted the four characters 形同虛設 as meaning there are "no holes" in the lugs: "two lugs at the back of the figure are not pierced so that they have no practical function to hold the backplate." This is clearly a misunderstanding of the four characters of Mr. Ch'i's comment as

The slanted, parallel, diagonal step folds on the upper arms are particularly chunky and heavy and do not allow much definition of the upper arm to appear. The forearms are covered with the loose ends of the robe that fall in three parallel step folds with incised lines and slightly undulating hems. The ends of the robe overlapping the forearms resemble the ends of a scarf. They create a countervailing, slightly diagonal, movement amidst the various abstract groups of parallel lines in the robe, but they are more artistic than true to the actual wearing of a *saṅghāṭī*. The overlaps curve over the forearm and over the legs and end with a delicate pinch-pleated hem whose style is very similar to those of the Phase II small Buddhas (Figs. 2.6, 2.7 and 2.9), but are not like the more angular hems in the Phase III (400-439) Buddhas (Figs. 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14, and 2.15). They seem to be a simplification of the more definite and complex hem arrangements as seen in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription image in Fig. 2.4, which most likely comes from Shensi.<sup>15</sup>

An interesting possible prototype for this style of parallel, diagonally clustered, pleats symmetrically positioned over both forearms as seen in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha (Fig. 2.16) appears in the remains of a large seated Buddha image that sits on a grass mat (probably Śākyamuni) from the west end (back wall) of a small shrine in the courtyard of the Buddhist monastery Complex C at Kara-tepe (Figs. 2.17a, b).<sup>16</sup> Complex C, the earlier of the complexes at the large Kara-tepe site near Termez in southern Uzbekistan, probably dates before the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century when the whole site was in decline. Though more naturalistically portrayed, the patterning and the symmetric structure of the composition of folds on both sides of a semicircular array of parallel folds on the Kara-tepe Buddha provides some understanding of the possible sources in the Bactrian region for this particular motif in the Ching-ch'uan and other bronze images in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Under the hands the three semi-circular, U-shaped, parallel step folds have a gently curved shape in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha—a patterning that is related to similar patterning in the 338 Buddha (Fig. 2.2) and in the Phase II Buddhas. However, in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha this feature is not as fluid and pronounced as in the 338 Buddha, which shows a masterful sense of smooth planes. On the other hand, this element in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha is stiffer and more restrained, closer in style to the Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku image in Fig. 2.7. Compared with the I-hsien Buddha of ca. 400 or early 5th century (Fig. 2.10), where the flap area is larger and there is greater sense of circular movement in

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explained above. Actually, Mr. Chi does not say that the lugs have no holes (as Whitfield asserts), just that they [the insertion holes] are “not functional” (“no use” or “meaningless”).

Further, Whitfield adds that there is no “ledge to support a back plate.” This is true, but a ledge would not be needed if the backplate (mandorla) were supported by the two lugs and held with a pin. Also, a backplate or mandorla does not always have a ledge support in early Chinese bronze images, as seen in the 423 [Liu] Sung seated bronze Maitreya Buddha (Rhie (2002), figs. 2.82a-c), whose mandorla is held up only by the two lugs. Whitfield himself, does not, however, clearly say whether he agrees or disagrees with the suggestion of Mr. Ch'i that the image is done by a later forger or copyist.

It is also worth while to note that Seiichi Mizuno in his article on the 429 Ta Hsia image says that “the make is high quality and the golden color is particularly good.” (See Rhie (2002), p. 475). It is unlikely that Prof. Mizuno would make such a comment if the sculpture had serious defects. The quality of the gold also speaks well for the originality of the work, as an imitation is less likely to have such high quality gold.

For all of these reasons, though there may be a few unusual features, there are none that warrant, in my view, the attribution to a later imitation copy or doubtful authenticity of either the image or its inscription, which names the donor as a prominent member of the Ta Hsia government, then in residence at P'ing-liang (see map in Fig. 1.1).

<sup>15</sup> For discussion of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription image see Rhie (2002), pp. 325-328 and for the dating see pp. 333-334.

<sup>16</sup> See Rhie (1999), pp. 185, 190.

the pleats, this element in the Ching-ch'uan Buddha is less emphatic and more abstractly rigid. The collar fold or cowl is a semicircular, slightly raised, flat band that is incised with wavy parallel lines as a decoration. This is a feature seen on the Hopei Provincial Museum bronze Buddha with canopy (Fig. 2.8) and the Buddha of the Ku-kung Museum altar (Fig. 2.9), as well as most other small bronze Buddhas from Phase II and the first part of Phase III, but not usually in the images of later Phase III (Figs. 2.14, 2.15).

The hands in dhyāna mudrā are placed on edge rather than lying flat. This is the prevailing attitude in the small bronze Buddhas of Phases I (ca. 317-350) and II (ca. 350-400), but is seldom seen in Phase III (400-439) small bronze Buddhas. In the Ching-ch'uan Buddha the hands are scored with lines indicating the knuckles. This technique is seen in many examples from Phases I and II, but is not so prevalent in Phase III images, which tend to use the dhyāna mudrā with the hands flat rather than raised on edge. The hand shape and scoring of the Ching-ch'uan Buddha is closest to those on the Hopei Provincial Museum and Ku-kung altar Buddha (Figs. 2.8 and 2.9), both of which were shown in Volume II to date around the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 348-350; 351-354. Recently, Roderick Whitfield has discussed the tomb from which the Hopei Provincial Museum altar and another small seated bronze dhyānāsana Buddha (Rhie (2002), fig. 2.37) were found (in Shih-chia chuang, Hopei). See Whitfield (2005), pp. 97-98. The initial report on the two Han dynasty tombs of which one had these two Buddhist images (Hopei sheng wen-wu kuan li wei yüan hui, "Shih-chia chuang shi Pei-sung ts'un Ch'ing-li le (liang) tso Han mu", *Wen-wu*, 1959, No. 1, pp. 53-55) dates the tomb to the late Eastern Han period, a date which Whitfield has accepted for the date of this Buddha altar (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century), suggesting that it is hardly likely for the images to have been put there at a later time (unless, he notes, by some tomb robbery gone terribly wrong). The initial report of the tomb merely states that "it is hard to know if they were originally there" (*Ibid.*, p. 55), a statement which Whitfield takes to have been "simply prompted by the fact that no Buddhist images of this date were known at the time of the excavation, rather than because of any evidence that they had been introduced to the tomb at a later date."

These two bronze images, including the altar in Fig. 2.8, were found scattered in the tomb, obviously having been disturbed. Reconstructing the circumstances of scattered images or buried images is highly speculative and hard to know with certainty.

Whitfield accepts the dating of the tomb for the images and takes the altar as being major evidence for his theory that the more elaborate style in these bronze icons was early and the simpler style was later: "The Beisongcun image [i.e., the Hopei Provincial Museum Buddha altar], found within a tomb of the late Eastern Han, i.e., of the early third century A.D., is a guide to the dating of the group as a whole [i.e., all the small bronze Buddhas from Hopei] within the third and early fourth centuries ..." However, there are numerous questions that arise if this altar (and the other small bronze Buddha sculpture) found in the tomb are accepted as early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. One is the problem of the mandorla. The earliest known examples of the mandorla (that is, the combination of a head and body halo) occur in Central Asia at Kara-tepe in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century and at Lou-lan in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century (See Rhie (1999), pp. 184, 402-407 and figs. 3.13a, b, 5.55a, b). The same is true of the peaked head halo used in the flying apsaras figures. The earliest evidence of the usage of the peaked halo is in Cave 38 at Kizil, probably dating to ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> or third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Rhie (2002), p. 690, fig. 4.66e). From my studies in Volumes I and II of this series, it does not appear that the earliest Chinese bronze Buddha images used a mandorla, but only had the circular head halo (this is true of the Harvard Buddha, the Tokyo National Museum bronze Buddha, and the 338 A.D. Asian Art Museum Buddha, [See Rhie (1999), figs. 1.65a, b; 2.26b, c; and Rhie (2002), figs. 2.2d-g]).

Similarly, there is the problem of the throne shape. The bronze Buddha images which appear to date in the late Later Han or Three Kingdoms period do not have a square throne, but are trapezoidal, semicircular or rectangular. Not until the 338 Buddha do we have certain evidence of the square throne being used (the squared type predominates in the Sixteen Kingdoms period small bronze Buddhas). These questions are among those that are hard to resolve if these two images found in the tomb are to be dated ca. early 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Angela Howard, in her description of this Hopei Provincial Museum altar in the exhibition catalogue *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD*, (James C. Y. Watt, et al), New York, 2004, No. 45 (p. 135), dates the altar to the Sixteen Kingdoms (304-439), early 4<sup>th</sup> century, without any mention of the tomb or tomb report, on the basis of its similarity with the 338 A.D. Buddha in the Asian Art Museum. With regard to the Hopei altar's relation with the 338 Buddha, the chronology of the bronze Buddha images presented in Volume II (Rhie (2002) discusses the developments from the 338

B. *Lion Throne*

The Buddha is cast as one piece with its lion throne, which has a slightly trapezoidal, cubic shape with a square front and back and somewhat narrow sides (Figs. 2.1d, e, f). This shape pedestal appears with some stucco images on stupas at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan, as seen on the Stupa B76 at Bāgh Gai (Fig. 8.36b). Connections with the art of the greater Gandhāran region will be discussed in more detail below in Chapter 8. Except for the front, each side of the throne is plain and each side slightly slants inward. An unusually large lug for the attachment of the mandorla projects from the upper back of the Buddha and a smaller one from the top edge at the back of the throne (Fig. 2.1f). Their holes, however, are vertically aligned.

On the front face are two lions, one on each side. They probably refer to the lion motif that occurs as the legs of the seat of Buddha images in many Gandhāran images, for example Figs. 8.25d, h and j. This motif is pervasive in the early bronze Buddha images of China, as early as the late Later Han period in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.<sup>18</sup> In the Ching-ch'uan image the lions are shown sitting on their haunches and facing forwards with their forepaws on the edge of the shallow forward projection of the base molding, which slightly projects for each lion as though making a separate base. This combination of projecting base molding and lions is common to the small bronze Buddhas of late Phase II and of Phase III. The images of Phase I and the earliest images of Phase II do not appear to have any base molding projections in front; the lions merely stand with their paws at the bottom edge of the throne.<sup>19</sup> The earliest examples with the projecting base rim molding appear to be from the latter part of Phase II, that is, the latter part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9). This feature continues into and throughout the Phase III small seated bronze Buddhas (Figs. 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, and 2.14). The lions in the Ching-ch'uan throne are typical of Phase II lions with lumpy ears, nose and cheeks and with bared, clenched teeth. They are different from the images of lions from the latter part of Phase III, from ca. 410-430's, which are much more modeled and lack the incised lines used in the Phase II to early Phase III images from ca. 350-ca. 410 or so.

Along the base rim molding is an incised wavy design (Fig. 2.16), commonly seen among the late Phase II small bronzes, including those discovered in Hopei. This appears to be a design derived from Gandhāran imagery; perhaps it is a design simplified from a Gandhāran decorative border, such as a row of acanthus leaves, which even in Gandhāran art was being simplified to closely resemble the wave pattern.<sup>20</sup> It could also be a water motif, such as seen in more advanced form in the pedestal of the wall painting of the seated Buddha of Group 12 of ca. 425 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 7.35). If it is a water motif, then it suggests water as the support of the lotus motif in the center of the front face of the

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Buddha, which has elements that are different from the Hopei Provincial Museum altar in Fig. 2.8, among them the fact that the 338 Buddha had only a head halo and not a mandorla, which, as noted above, does not appear to have been in usage in China prior to ca. mid-4th century as far as I can ascertain at present.

She also cites the gold spangles in the canopy as related to ornaments "seen on the late third-and fourth-century gold headpieces unearthed in the burials of the Yan [Yen] elites, in present-day Liaoning Province." However, it should be noted that the type of spangles used on the Hopei Provincial Museum altar, which are tear-drop in shape, are found in the tombs of the Yen (in both tear-drop and circular shape), not only among the early (late 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 4<sup>th</sup> century) tombs, but also in the mid -4<sup>th</sup> century tombs, and in those of the Northern Yen of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. On that basis, the spangles on the altar canopy could relate to any of these dates and not merely to those of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>18</sup> See Rhie (1999) and (2002) for more discussion on this.

<sup>19</sup> See Rhie (2002), figs. 2.28a, 2.28c, 2.29, 2.30a, 2.31, 2.32, 2.33a, 2.34, 2.35, 2.36a, b, c, 2.37, 2.38.

<sup>20</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 359 and figs. 2.53 and 2.74b.



pedestal and possibly refers to the water designs from which lotus pedestals rise in many Gandhāran stone images (Fig. 6.19).

The wave-like incised line patterning on the base molding occurs in the Phase II images with a rim molding, but disappears from the moldings of the late Phase III images (Fig. 2.13, 2.14, 2.15). Interestingly, the incised patterning on the Hopei Provincial Museum image of late Phase II in Fig. 2.8 has a hint of the geometric patterning (rather than the wave pattern) of the kind seen on the rug of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha found in Sian in Fig. 2.4 of early Phase II. Possibly this rather Indian/Central Asian motif has some residue in the Hopei example (Fig. 2.8), one factor that suggests that the Hopei image does not date too far from the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha. In sum, the rim molding shape, size and patterning on the Ching-ch'uan image is closest in style to those of images from the latter part of Phase II, around the time of the Hopei Provincial Museum image (Fig. 2.8) and the Ku-kung Museum image (Fig. 2.9). The rim molding is not as narrow as those of early Phase III (Figs. 2.10, 2.11) nor is it plain and without markings as those of later Phase III (Figs. 2.13, 2.14, 2.15).

Between the lions is a ubiquitous plant form, probably a lotus, but it resembles the motif of the bodhi tree leaf or lotus as depicted in a number of cases from Gandhāra and, most interestingly, in some early remains from Duldul Akur in Kucha (Fig. 2.18).<sup>21</sup> In the Ching-ch'uan image the lotus is in raised relief with delicate incised lines for markings and the petals are long and curve markedly upward at the ends. There is some resemblance to the long, rather strongly modeled lotus petals seen in the pedestal of one of the figures in the bronze mirror in Fig. 3.22, studied in Volume II as a work probably from the South and dated to ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> It seems there may be some variations in the lotus petal design in China during the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Ching-ch'uan image, however, has a distinctive long, raised central rib on the front petal (Fig. 2.1e). It is not as pronounced as seen in the Phase III examples, where the motif is common, but more developed in the sense that the individual leaves and the pod are proportionately larger (Figs. 2.10, 2.11, 2.13 and 2.14).<sup>23</sup> The Phase I examples do not use a lotus motif on the pedestal, but examples of some of the Phase II Hopei group of small bronze Buddhas have the lotus motif incised and not in relief (Figs. 2.7, 2.8, 2.9).<sup>24</sup> The earliest example of the Hopei group to have this lotus element in raised relief is the I-hsien Buddha of ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.10).

In Volume II it was shown that the Buddha-lion throne unit began to be cast as one with the 4-footed stand sometime around the 420's, as seen in the image dated 429 under the Ta Hsia (Fig. 2.14) and

<sup>21</sup> See detailed discussion of the "three-petal flower" in (Rhie (2002), pp. 604-605 and figs. 4.4a, c and d).

<sup>22</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 180-186 and figs. 137a-i.

<sup>23</sup> See also the Metropolitan Museum of Art seated bronze Buddha (probably dating 426 A.D.) and others: Rhie (2002), figs. 2.76a, 2.77, 2.89a.

Roderick Whitfield in his recent article has concluded that the inscription on the Metropolitan Museum bronze Buddha is a later addition (Whitfield (2005), p. 96). Though there is some difficulty with deciphering the *nien-hao*, it can be noted here that the grooves of the inscription still retain some original gilding (observed from my first-hand examination and also from a color photograph). It is unlikely that the image was regilded if the inscription was added later. Also, the 426 Ch'eng-kuang 承光 *nien-hao* is not for the Former Ch'in as erroneously noted by Whitfield, but is a Ta Hsia *nien-hao* (see Rhie (2002), pp. 448-451; the Former Ch'in dates 351-385/394; the Ta Hsia dates 407 or 411-431). I can also note here that on p. 448 I made an error in the Romanization of the character 正 (which is *cheng* and not "ch'eng"). At a later time I will have an article on the complex issue of the date of the Metropolitan Museum 423 Buddha and some of the other small bronze images of the time.

<sup>24</sup> For others, see Rhie (2002), figs. 2.40a, 2.42, 2.43a, b, 2.48.

others.<sup>25</sup> The Ching-ch'uan image does not reflect this technical change, which seems to be widespread by the 430's, as witnessed also by the seated bronze Buddha dated 437 under the [Liu] Sung (Fig. 2.15). Both the 429 and 437 images (and others), however, continue to have their mandorlas cast separately and attached by lugs.

### C. *Mandorla*

The mandorla of the Ching-ch'uan altar is a remarkable example (Figs. 2.16, 2.19), and quite different from the Hopei Phase II mandorlas (Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9), at least from those we now know. First of all, it is composed of two clear circular units: circular head halo and circular body halo combined to make the encompassing mandorla. This particular mandorla shape is known in the wooden lintel of Buddha niches found by Sven Hedin at Lou-lan Site L.A. (Fig. 2.20) relatively certainly dating to ca. 300 (late 3rd or early 4th century).<sup>26</sup> This Lou-lan wooden Buddha frieze establishes the existence of the mandorla with combination circular head halo and circular body halo by ca. A.D. 300 in the Shan-shan kingdom of eastern Central Asia.<sup>27</sup> The Hopei examples in Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9 and this Ching-ch'uan image would appear to be among the earliest examples of a mandorla (head and body halos combined) thus far known in extant images from China.

In the Ching-ch'uan image, the head and body halos, both a little different from each other in decoration, are quite stunningly patterned with both raised relief and delicate incised lines. Both have an outer flat rim, slightly wider for the head halo, decorated with the incised parallel, wavy (water?) line pattern. This is remarkably different from the flame or rayed pattern for the outer rim usually seen in Gandhāran halos and which become prevalent in Chinese halos around the early 5th century and common by the 420s. The outer rim borders the slightly depressed zone containing lotus petals in relief, larger in the head halo than in the body halo. Each petal has a somewhat soft appearance with a raised convex surface. Each petal has a prominent, raised, central strip that divides it into two equal parts and projects to form the tip of the petal. This may be an early form of the "lobe shape" lotus petal prevalent from the early 5th century (Fig. 2.12); it possibly represents a sepal lying on the petal. The petals have delicately incised patterns of hooked and straight lines, possibly also simulating sepals. This is a lotus petal design different from the flat, smooth petals seen in the pedestal of the standing Buddha in the Kyoto National Museum dated to Phase I in Volume II (Fig. 3.13) and the two raised lobes (sepals?)

<sup>25</sup> For the conclusions regarding this important technical watershed, see Rhie (2002), pp. 487-488, 851 and worked out in detail with the small bronze Buddha images of Phase III on pp. 445-459 and 474-477.

<sup>26</sup> See the discussion of the dating of the Lou-lan materials in Rhie (1999), Chapter 5 section C, the L.A. area (pp. 399-407) and conclusions pp. 423-425. It has been shown by Stein and borne out by many factors, that Lou-lan demised by the early 4th century and that the so-called "Central Route" that went through Lou-lan and was guarded by the Chinese troops of the Western Chin 西晉 (265-317), was abandoned for trade and travel (and also ceased to be a protectorate of the Western Chin as that dynasty was collapsing in the early 4th century) in favor of the less dangerous "Northern Route" from northwest China.

<sup>27</sup> The earliest appearance of the head-body halo unit (i.e., the mandorla) in Buddhist art is not well known. Most early images known in the early Indian schools of Buddhist imagery, including the Gandāran area schools, used a circular head halo for the Buddha image. The Buddha niche at Kara-tepe Complex D (near Termez, Uzbekistan) of ca. 3rd century, however, shows the outlines of a head halo in low relief and the body halo as a painted element, a combination that may have been used in other sites at this time, though there are so far few evidences. A wall painting of ca. late third or early 4th century of Buddha with monks in Complex B at Kara-tepe clearly shows a body halo and circular head halo. It appears that the mandorla form for the Buddha image may have been in usage around the 3rd century, but this Lou-lan Buddha niche frieze, as a quite securely datable image with clearly defined head halo-body halo combination, is a very important work that confirms this factor. See Rhie (1999), pp. 187-188 and figs. 3.16a; p. 184 and figs. 3.13a, b.

in each petal that is common in the pedestals of Chinese bronze images from ca. 400, as seen in the early example of the Asian Art Museum standing Kuanyin (Fig. 2.12). The smooth, convex lotus petals appearing in the standing attendant Bodhisattvas of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century altar in Fig. 2.11 could be a form closer to the Ching-ch'uan example, though lacking the medial raised strip and having a more pointed end. In the Ching-ch'uan image there is a faint, incised pattern of a second row of lotus petals whose points show between the relief petals in the head halo.

The innermost circle in the Buddha's head halo is a lotus pod design with double incised semicircles on the outer edge and scattered circles filling the remainder of the surface indicating the seed holes (Fig. 2.19). A delicately incised overall pattern of fine parallel wavy lines fills the inner flat zone of the body halo (except for the space covered by the Buddha image). The raised outer rim and sunken rim of lotus petals in the body halo are somewhat reminiscent of the halos of the Three Kingdoms (220-265) and Western Chin 西晉 (265-317) period, as seen in some small images from the South.<sup>28</sup> This is possibly an indication of relative proximity of the Ching-ch'uan mandorla style to 3rd century modes, though there are obvious developments in the greater complexity of the Ching-ch'uan example.

Unlike the mandorla of the Ching-ch'uan image, those from the Hopei regional images all appear to have a sharp triangular tip at the very top (Figs. 2.8 and 2.9). This is probably a regional experimental style which may well be the early stages of what later develops into the more pronounced and gracefully pointed leaf shape or flame shaped mandorla. In the Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku image in Fig. 2.7, probably from Hopei, the sharp point of the mandorla is very obvious with the attached figure now missing. Also, a pointed head halo appears on the two attached flying apsaras figures. The large mandorla as well as the two smaller ones with the attendant standing Bodhisattvas in Fig. 2.11 of early Phase III (probably from Hopei), seems to be an early form of the flame mandorla, which developed into the pointed mandorla that combined an outer rim of flame patterns into a pointed mandorla (often called a flame halo).

An interesting gold repoussé hat ornament recently discovered from a tomb of the Northern Yen (407-436 A.D) in northeastern Hopei and Liaoning has a design of a dhyānāsana Buddha surrounded by a flaming aura like a flame type mandorla (Figs. 2.21a, b). This is one important evidence to support an early 5<sup>th</sup> century appearance of the flame mandorla in northeastern China. This form, though somewhat difficult to see, is close to the full mandorla as seen in Fig. 2.11 with its individualized tendrils of flames. These examples are rare representatives among independent images that show the evolving form of the flame type mandorla from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, of which Fig. 2.15, dated 437, is an example from the South. The Ching-ch'uan image's mandorla is more clearly rooted in the modes evolving in the circular halos of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century rather than being related to the development of the pointed type evolving apparently from around the mid 4<sup>th</sup> and into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century and possibly related to the flame shape.

As noted earlier, the four projections on the back of the halo may indicate the attachment of other sculptures to the halo. More than likely these would be flying apsaras figures, but this is not certain. Nor it is clear how the attachments would be secured; this issue requires more investigation. The square cut out at the bottom and the rectangular hole in the center of the mandorla are for fitting and securing the mandorla to the Buddha/pedestal unit. The mandorla was secured by insertion of the canopy pole through the three lugs provided on the back of the head halo, back of the Buddha, and back of the upper part of the rectangular pedestal (Fig. 2.1d).

<sup>28</sup> Rhie (1999), figs. 2.16b and 2.19.



## D. Canopy

The canopy, diameter 14 cm (5.5"), appears as a large repoussé umbrella or parasol above the ensemble (Figs. 2.1a-d). Its large size in proportion to the whole is remarkable. It is proportionately larger and positioned lower than the canopy on the example in the Hopei Provincial Museum in Fig. 2.8.<sup>29</sup> The underside of the canopy has a short projecting tube or socket in the center into which the top end of the pole is inserted (Fig. 2.1b). There appears to be a circular design, possibly a lotus, around this socket projection. The upper (outer) surface of the canopy is decorated by repoussé technique with a slightly raised, schematic open lotus design that has three layers, each of eight petals (Figs. 2.22a, b). These petals appear rather broad and seem to approach a nearly semicircular contour on the front edge. The shape of this lotus petal is similar to the lotus in the pedestal of the standing bronze Buddha in the Kyoto National Museum in Fig. 3.13, which was dated in Volume II to first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The central axis of each petal is a thin, indented, groove-like straight line, of which there are sixteen such lines radiating from the circular center. The lines of the radiating axes continue to the edge and divide the whole canopy into 16 units. The circular center of the canopy is bordered by a slightly convex outer band and has a large raised boss in the exact center. The edge of the canopy is turned down to make a narrow rim into which 16 holes have been punched equidistant around the rim (Figs. 2.1a-d). Each hole matches with the end of a radiating line. These holes are presumably used to attach dangling spangles by thin wires. These spangles are now all missing, but some still survived on the one other rare surviving altar with a canopy now in the Hopei Provincial Museum in Figs. 2.8 and 2.23.<sup>30</sup> The Hopei Provincial Museum altar has slightly convex gold disks in the shape of tear-drop jewels wired to the canopy with twisted gold wire (Fig. 2.23).

Dangling gold disks, now lost from the Ching-ch'uan canopy, such as the three found attached to the Hopei Provincial Museum altar, have also been found in recent years on decorative or symbolic objects excavated from tombs in northeastern China and also in tombs of the Ordos region of northern China.<sup>31</sup> They are well-known from tomb sites uncovered in Bactria (northern Afghanistan) and in the gold crowns of Korea from Koguryō and Old Silla, the latter of which are numerous and famous. These are not seen in what we now know of art from Eastern Central Asia (Sinkiang). Whether or not this feature is associated with the Scythians and certain nomadic ethnic groups is not yet determinable, but it seems likely. The usage of this kind of canopy representation with gold spangles (circular or tear-shaped) may have died out by the early 5<sup>th</sup> century in China in the Chinese bronze Buddha images from Phase III (ca. 400-439). The sculptures from the latter part of Phase III do not appear to have had a canopy. Furthermore, in surviving images prior to ca. 350 we do not see suitable lugs to attach a canopy. They all appear to be equipped only for the attachment of a circular head halo with only one lug at the back of the head.

<sup>29</sup> Also compare with the view in Rhie (2002), fig. 2.40d.

<sup>30</sup> For photo and drawing of this altar with the three spangles still attached, see Rhie (2002), figs. 2.40d, e.

<sup>31</sup> These were discussed in detail in Volume II (Rhie, (2002), pp. 349-350), including references to the Afghan examples and to examples discovered in the Yen tombs of the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Hopei and Liao-ning, northeastern China in respect to the Hopei Provincial Museum altar. They have since been discussed in relation to the Hopei altar by Angela Howard, who dates the altar to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century in James C. Y. Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD*, New Haven and London, 2004, No. 45, p. 135. However, it should be noted that these gold disc spangles appear on objects found in tombs during the entire period of the Three Yen [Former Yen 前燕 (352-370), Later Yen 後燕 (384-409), and Southern Yen 南燕 (398-410)] and also on the Northern Yen 北燕 (409-436) period tomb objects, and not only on the earliest examples of the Former Yen. Also see above, note 2.17.

At present we can judge that this kind of repoussé canopy attached to a bronze Buddha altar ensemble was primarily, if not exclusively, a feature of the Phase II period (ca. 350-400) Buddhist art in China. This does not mean that the canopy *per se* disappeared from Chinese Buddhist art. It continues as a regular feature in Chinese Buddhist art of all periods and regions in both paintings and sculptures, though it may be presented in a variety of different ways.<sup>32</sup> The spectacular thing about the Phase II canopies as seen in the Ching-ch'uan and Hopei Provincial Museum Buddha altars is that they are so large in diameter and have the fringe of golden spangles, possibly indicating jewels.<sup>33</sup> This particular kind seems to have had a limited life to the period of Phase II. Though its stylistic origins are not yet entirely clear, there is some connection to the gold work of the Afghan/Bactrian region. The appearance of the canopy on Chinese bronze altars seems coeval with the appearance of the full mandorla (a more complex configuration than simply the circular head halo), evidences of which appear in Central Asia at Kara-tepe and in Lou-lan by the late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Other elements of the canopy design of the Hopei Provincial Museum altar are generally similar to that of the Ching-ch'uan altar, but with some individual differences. The repoussé technique is similar, as well as the turned down rim with 16 holes for hanging gold spangles. Differences appear mostly with regard to the details of the lotus design. Rather than three rows of petals as in the Ching-ch'uan canopy, there are only two rows in the Hopei image. Rather than a nearly semi-circular curve for the lotus petals, the lotus of the Hopei image has pointed tips. Rather than the central motif being a simple boss and rim, the central motif of the Hopei image has a six-petal lotus in the banded circle along with a tiny central boss. Rather than a thin groove line for the rays, in the Hopei image the ray lines have delicate punch-mark dotting providing a jewel-like effect (Fig. 2.23).<sup>34</sup> Though certain basic similarities confirm the existence of a generally similar type across North China in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, these differences show that there were variants, possibly due to a regional or time differential.

#### E. Four-footed Stand

The 4-footed stand (4-legged stand, base or dais) acts like a base for the altar ensemble and for lifting up the Buddha's lion throne pedestal (Figs. 2.1a-d, 2.24a). The stand is rectangular with sharp corners and edges and a slightly convex top surface. In the center of the top surface is a slightly raised rectangular platform that holds the Buddha/lion throne unit. This method of placement positions the Buddha/

<sup>32</sup> In sculpture, for example, there are canopies above the two attendant Buddhas of Cave 18 at Yün-kang of ca. 460's and there are many painted examples in the Kansu paintings of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, including those in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169. The canopy is a quintessential Indian element, showing the utmost respect—that afforded rulers and Buddhas and other sacred beings. It is shown in Gandhāran art, such as in the reliefs of the Buddha from the Heaven of the Thirty-three, where Indra holds the parasol over the Buddha's head. It is possible that the canopy in many cases was merely painted on the niche and that these have not survived (there is an example in Tun-huang Cave 272 of a painted canopy in the dome part inside the main Buddha's niche). The canopy is also seen in the wall paintings of the early Koguryō tomb wall paintings, the earliest being that of Anak Tomb No. 3 dated ca. 357 (see Rhie (2002), fig. 1.66k) and other tombs (Rhie (2002), figs. 1.68, 1.75c, d, e). It also appears in Ku K'ai-chih's (d. ca. 406) painting of the "Nymph of the Lo River" held over the head of the poet and also over the nymph in the scene of her descent into the river in her canopied dragon chariot (Rhie (2002), figs. 1.51, 1.54c). The canopies in these small bronze Buddha altars also have notable resemblance in terms of shape and structure with the canopies covering some chariots from the Han and Three Kingdoms period tomb paintings and carvings.

<sup>33</sup> This may also be an interpretation and simplification of the garland of flowers hanging from the canopies still surviving on examples of Gandhāran stone relief sculpture.

<sup>34</sup> See Rhie (2002), figs. 2.40a, e and f.

throne unit in the center of the stand with the top surface of the stand providing equal space around it. This occurs on all the surviving 4-footed stands belonging to the small bronze Buddhas classified in Volume II as belonging to Phase II (Figs. 2.8, 2.9 and another in the Sano Bijutsukan).<sup>35</sup> However, in the Buddha with 4-footed stand from I-hsien, Hopei, of early Phase III (ca. 400) in Fig. 2.10, according to the report of P'ei and Chi,<sup>36</sup> the hollow throne unit fits over the top of a rectangular flange, thus covering the flange, which is 1.5 cm high, 3.5 cm long and 1.6 cm wide in that case. So, the I-hsien Buddha appears to sit directly on the top surface of the stand rather than sitting on top of the raised platform, as in the Ching-ch'uan example. Further, the I-hsien Buddha/throne unit occupies more of the top surface of the stand, and thus the Buddha/throne unit appears more dominant with less framing provided by the top surface of the stand than occurs in the Ching-ch'uan and Hopei bronze Buddha altars of Phase II.

The technique used in the I-hsien Buddha's stand is slightly different from the technique of the Ching-ch'uan Buddha and some Phase II Hopei Buddha altars. In the latter, the rim of the raised platform to hold the Buddha/throne unit can be clearly seen even with the Buddha/throne unit placed on it (Figs. 2.8 and 2.9), but this is not in the case with the I-hsien Buddha (Fig. 2.10). This factor indicates that the I-hsien Buddha of early Phase III is a step removed from the time of the Ching-ch'uan and Phase II Hopei Buddha altars. The I-hsien altar perhaps shows the results of experimentation with techniques of attaching the Buddha/lion throne unit to the 4-footed stand prior to the advent of the Buddha, pedestal and 4-footed base being cast as a single unit.<sup>37</sup>

The Ching-ch'uan Buddha ensemble is certainly different from the watershed technical advancement which took place in Phase III at least by ca. 420's in which the 4-footed stand was cast as one together with the Buddha/lion throne unit, thus making one solid cast unit combining the Buddha, throne, and 4-footed stand (as seen for example in the 429 Ta Hsia image in Fig. 2.14 and the 437 image in Fig. 2.15).<sup>38</sup> From the 420's or 430's onwards this was the invariable standard for the small bronze Buddha altars, as far as can be seen from present examples, including dated ones.<sup>39</sup> This solved the problem of the Buddha/lion throne unit becoming detached, separated, and possibly lost from its 4-footed base, as apparently happened to many Phase II and some early Phase III small bronze Buddha altars, most of which today are without their 4-footed stand, which they presumably originally had.

The legs of the Ching-ch'uan stand are cornered, of even width, and slightly splayed (Fig. 2.24a). The sharp angles, even width of the of the legs, and the straight edge on the lower edges of the top agree closely with the 4-footed bases of Phase II Hopei region bronze Buddha altars before the cut-out scallop-wave designs appear on the front at the lower edge of the top. Such scallop-wave designs occur

<sup>35</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.45.

<sup>36</sup> P'ei shu-lan and Chi Yen-k'un, "Hopei sheng cheng-chi te pu-fen Shih-liu-kuo Pei-ch'ao Fo-chiao t'ung tsao-hsiang" (Buddhist Bronze Images of the Sixteen Kingdoms and Southern and Northern Dynasties in the Hopei Province Collection Section), *Wen-wu*, 1998, No. 7, p. 68. Also see Rhie (2002), p. 419.

<sup>37</sup> The careful study of the technique of fitting the Buddha/lion throne unit onto the 4-footed stand could produce interesting results. This would require a detailed examination of the bottom of all the small bronze Buddha images to understand more precisely the various methods used. Some appear to sit on top of the raised platform; others appear to fit over it. Further investigation of this feature could possibly help in further classifying these small images to certain periods and/or regions based upon technical usage. This would certainly be a fruitful avenue for further study.

<sup>38</sup> This could have occurred even a little earlier, as indicated by the Asian Art Museum standing Kuan-yin (dated in Volume II ca. 400) which is cast with its four-footed stand. Fig. 2.12 and also see Rhie (2002), pp. 410-415 and figs. 2.56a-e.

<sup>39</sup> See discussion in Rhie (2002), pp. 419, 476-477, 487-488 and figs. 2.82c, 2.89a-c, 2.89d.

only on the front side in the early Phase III images (Figs. 2.11, 2.12), but by the late 420's they appear on other sides as well and possibly on all four sides such as in the 429 altar in Fig. 2.14. Though there are some subtle differences, the shape of the Ching-ch'uan stand is probably most similar to the 4-footed stand of the small bronze Buddha found in I-hsien of ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.10).

Incised designs on the Ching-ch'uan altar are carved on the 4-footed stand on the front side only: a loose, wave (or vine) pattern along the horizontal edge and down the front surface of the two front legs (Figs. 2.24a, b). On the slightly convex top surface of the stand are incised two rows of lotus petals executed in a delicate, skillful line drawing technique that shows freedom and simplicity in the style. The petals are gracefully curved, rather long and sharply pointed. An incised line is drawn down the center of each petal. A second row appears underneath the top layer of petals (Fig. 2.24b). The drawing of these incised patterns is not as boldly executed as the linear designs on the early Phase III altar in Fig. 2.11. Possibly these incised designs are meant to be the representation of a lotus pond on which the Buddha's pedestal is placed. Such water motifs, usually with a large lotus pedestal emerging from the water, occur in the art of Gandhāra, such as seen in some large complex relief steles, as well as in some preaching Buddha triads and pentads. The meaning of this kind of representation has not been deciphered with regard to Gandhāran art. Such water motifs supporting a lotus pedestal of a Buddha also appear in some of the wall paintings in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (Groups 11 and 12 on the North Wall dating ca. 425; Figs. 7.33, 7.35). The designs in the Cave 169 paintings are in a much bolder style than those of the Ching-ch'uan design. The water and lotus petal motifs seem to appear rather ubiquitously, that is, with somewhat universal iconographic signification, but probably connected with Mahāyāna representation. It is possible, however, that this kind of design in the Ching-ch'uan altar ensemble could be a sign of a Buddha's Land or Realm, or perhaps simply a reference to transcendence. These are issues for further research.

### III. CONCLUSIONS OF DATING AND REGION OF MAKE FROM THE TECHNICAL AND STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

The analysis above places the style of this Buddha altar in Phase II (ca. 350-400), probably around the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and likely before ca. 400.<sup>40</sup> It does not share the major stylistic and technical attributes of the bronze images of the 420's and later and also has some distinctions from the bronze altar images dated in Volume I to ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 2.10 and 2.11). That would mean that the image was likely to have been made during the last years of the Former Ch'in (351-385) during the flourishing period of Fu Chien's reign from around 375-383, or the early years of the Later Ch'in (386-418) under the Yao who controlled Shensi and part of Kansu. Most likely it came from the region of "kuan-chung" (the Middle Gate), that is, around Ch'ang-an, though there are not yet enough materials to determine this with certitude. It is close in many respects with the complete altar ensemble

<sup>40</sup> This bronze Buddha altar image has been dated to ca. 400 by Liu Yü-lin (1983), p. 76; to the latter half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century by S. Matsubara in his most recent work: Matsubara (1995), text, (Vol. I), p. 243, Nos. 11, 12a, b, 13a, b, c); to the Northern Wei in CKMSSC, Vol. 3 (sculpture), text for Fig. 101 on p. 38; and labeled as belonging to the Western Ch'in and dating 430-431 by A. Juliano and J. Lerner in the catalogue of their 2001 exhibition catalogue *Monks and Merchants, Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China, Gansu and Ningxia, 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Century*, New York, 2001, No. 47, pp. 150-151). It has also been briefly mentioned in Volume II of this series in connection with the bronze Buddha altars of the Hopei region (Rhie (2002), pp. 346 ff).

from Shih-chia chuang 石家庄 now in the Hopei Provincial Museum (Fig. 2.8), but shows variations, such as the design of the mandorla and in the details of the canopy patterning, that probably indicate a different regional origin while also being related in a generally similar way indicative of inter-related transmissions of stylistic and technical factors across northern China. While the altars differ in some significant details, they belong to a similar genre which seems to have universal adherence in the North China regions.<sup>41</sup> In the excellent condition of its parts (only missing some attachments to the mandorla, possible attendants attached at the side of the main image, and the spangles attached to the canopy) this image is extremely rare and important in the early history of Buddhist imagery in China. It may well reflect the imagery from the later years of the Former Ch'in when Buddhism flowered in the Ch'ang-an area in the period before Fu Chien's defeat in 383 (at the battle of the Fei River in Anhui province) when Tao-an was working there (from 375 until his death in 385) with various translators to produce a significant series of textual translations.<sup>42</sup> Or it may reflect the imagery of the early years of the Later Ch'in when Yao Hsing brought Kumārajīva to Ch'ang-an (in ca. 402) and Ch'ang-an was once again stable and a center of flourishing Buddhist studies for at least a decade.

#### IV. THE "KUEI-I-HOU YIN" BRONZE SEAL AND THE DATE OF THE BURIAL

The small gilt bronze seal in Fig. 2.25 found with the Ching-ch'uan hoard is an official seal (H. 3.3 cm; seal bottom 2.5 x 2.4 cm). It has a hand grip in the form of a recumbent horse and four characters on the bottom surface in "white letters" (pai wen 白文, i.e., incised) using the seal script (chuan shu 篆書) that is flat and square (p'ing chih fang 平直方). Liu Yü-lin, who introduced this hoard, describes the script as natural, powerful, and simple, and states that the characters are written in the Han-Wei style, similar to the "Li-i-chiang-chün yin" 立義將軍印 seal in the Shensi Provincial Museum, as well as others.<sup>43</sup> The characters, which read "kuei-i-hou yin" 歸義侯印 are, according to Liu Yü-lin, the "hou" 侯 (earl, prince or marquis) title of a "subjugated barbarian" (ethnic minority) and was an official title originally from the Han dynasty. It appears in the *Hou Han shu* among the record of the 100 offices and also in the *Wei shu* official records.<sup>44</sup> Most pertinent, however, is the record that Yao Hsing 姚興 (r. 393-416) of the Later Ch'in 後秦 (386-418) awarded Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei 乞伏乾歸 the appointment of "Ho-chou tz'u-shih" 河州刺史 and bestowed him as "kuei-i-hou" 歸義侯.<sup>45</sup> This occurred at the time when Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei capitulated to Yao Hsing following his loss of Yüan-ch'uan 苑川 to Yao Hsing and Ch'ien-kuei's flight to Fu-han 枹罕 (Fig. 1.1).

According to Liu Yü-lin, it is common practice for rulers to give a bronze seal at the time of the bestowal of titles. He asserts that this particular title was given by Yao Hsing to Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei in keng-tzu 庚子 4<sup>th</sup> year, autumn, 7<sup>th</sup> month (T'o-pa Wei, T'ien-hsing 天興 3<sup>rd</sup> year), which is 400 A.D.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Perhaps also in the South, but so far we have no evidences of this except the indirect evidence of the small bronze found near Seoul in territory of ancient Paekche, which could conceivably have come to Korea from South China, with which Paekche had well-known relations. Rhie (2002), pp. 341-342 and figs. 2.30a-d.

<sup>42</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 309-317.

<sup>43</sup> Liu (1983), p. 75.

<sup>44</sup> Liu (1983), p. 76. (*Wei shu*, chüan 106, shang (geography record) and chüan 80).

<sup>45</sup> *Chin shu*, chüan 125, p. 3121; *Wei shu*, chüan 99, p. 2199; *Pei shih*, chüan 93, p. 3080.

<sup>46</sup> Though the appointment and bestowal of the "kuei-i-hou" title by Yao Hsing is recorded in the *Chin shu*, *Wei shu* and *Pei shih* in the biography of Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei (see above note 43), the exact date is not provided. Mr. Liu does not provide a citation regarding the source of the specific date except to say that "According to the record, keng-tz'u



Liu Yü-lin suggests that this bronze seal found in the hoard is the seal given by Yao Hsing to Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of 400 A.D. and subsequently passed down by the Ch'i-fu rulers to Ch'i-fu Mu-mo (d. 431), the last ruler of the Western Ch'in.<sup>47</sup>

It can certainly be thought that such a seal would have been a valuable asset of the Ch'i-fu rulers, as part of their legitimate status. The fact that such an important seal was found along with the bronze Buddhist altar, and other more utilitarian objects, as though hastily buried, further suggests that it was perhaps buried under duress or haste, possibly to be retrieved later. If this is indeed the seal of Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei given to him by Yao Hsing in 400, then the burial of the hoard could not have been before 400. However, further questions arise, such as why these objects, including the seal and Buddha altar, would have been buried near Ching-ch'uan. The location of the burial is in the far eastern corner of Kansu in the area near An-ting 安定, a prominent city of the Sixteen Kingdoms period (Fig. 1.1). From the data in the histories, especially as revealed in the *Chin shu* and *Wei shu* (see Chapter 1, section I), it does not appear that the An-ting area was ever under the control of the Western Ch'in during the reigns of Kuo-jen, Ch'ien-kuei or Chih-p'an.<sup>48</sup>

Liu Yü-lin has suggested a relation of these objects and their burial with the final days of Ch'i-fu Mu-mo, the last ruler of the Western Ch'in, who briefly controlled the area between P'ing-liang and An-ting around 430-431 A.D. by permission of the T'o-pa Wei Emperor Shih-tsu. According to the

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庚子 4<sup>th</sup> year, autumn, 7<sup>th</sup> month, Ch'in 秦 issued an edict making Ch'ien-kuei to be kuei-i-hou." Liu (1983), p. 76. Keng-tz'u cyclic date corresponds to the 4<sup>th</sup> year Lung-an 隆安 of the Eastern Chin 東晉 (400 A.D.). Though I have not been able to locate this specific record mentioned by Mr. Liu, it does correspond with the recorded circumstances in the *Chin shu*, *Wei shu* and *Pei shih* around the time of 400.

<sup>47</sup> Liu (1983), p. 76. "Just before Mu-mo was destroyed, he panicked and fled burning the cities and destroying the treasure vessels. These artifacts [in the burial] have the meaning of memorial objects that were possibly buried on his own governing land."

<sup>48</sup> An-ting was a frequently contested area during the 4th century and up to 439 when the T'o-pa Wei finally fully assimilated the area, which was always considered vital to the control of Ch'ang-an, the central power base of the kuan-chung region and capital of the Former Ch'in, Later Ch'in and Ta Hsia. From around 357 until 385 An-ting was under Fu Chien's Former Ch'in. From 385 to ca. 417 An-ting was primarily controlled by the Later Ch'in (the Yao clan), but as Ho-lien Po-po increased his presence in the region north of Ch'ang-an, the area was also subjected to his attacks. After the death of Yao Hsing in 416, Ho-lien Po-po moved to An-ting in order to prepare for his attack on Ch'ang-an. (Rhie (2002), p. 379, from the *Chin shu*). After a brief interlude of conquest of Ch'ang-an by Liu Yü of the Eastern Chin, Ho-lien Po-po obtained Ch'ang-an and by 419 had all the former lands of the Later Ch'in, including An-ting and the eastern Kansu area, as his Ta Hsia kingdom. By the mid-420's, after Ho-lien Po-po's death in 425, his kingdom was crumbling under the advances of the T'o-pa Wei. In the 6th month of 427 Ho-lien Ch'ang 赫連昌 (who had usurped the throne after Po-po's death) was forced to flee the T'o-pa Wei who captured T'ung-wan, the fortress stronghold of Po-po (Fig. 1.1). Ho-lien Ch'ang moved the Ta Hsia government to P'ing-liang 平涼 (northwest of An-ting 安定). After Ho-lien Ch'ang was captured there by the T'o-pa Wei, Ho-lien Ting took charge and fled to Shang-kuei 上邽 (near T'ien-shui). Fleeing from the T'o-pa Wei, in 431 Ho-lien Ting was eventually captured by the T'u-yü-hun when crossing the Yellow River in Ch'ing-hai. The T'u-yü-hun sent Ho-lien Ting to the T'o-pa Wei.

Meanwhile, to the west, the Ch'i-fu clan, who by 385 had established the kingdom of the Western Ch'in based around the Lan chou and Fu-han area (Fig. 1.1) with control of the T'ien-shui area after 417, by ca. 430 were so weakened by disasters of earthquake and pressures from Ho-lien Ting (Ta Hsia) that the last king, Ch'i-fu Mu-mo, sent an emissary to the T'o-pa Wei emperor Shih-tsu asking for permission to flee to his territory. Shih-tsu granted him the land between P'ing-liang 平涼 and An-ting 安定 (Fig. 1.1). Mu-mo then burned the cities there and destroyed "the treasure vessels" and took 15,000 families to Kao-t'ien ku 高田谷. He was opposed by Ho-lien Ting, so Mu-mo went to Nan-an 南安 in 431. When Ho-lien Ting sent his prince with 10,000 troops to attack Nan-an (whose population was then in a condition of severe starvation), Mu-mo and 500 of his clan surrendered. They were taken to Shang-kuei, where Mu-mo was killed in 431, ending the Western Ch'in. (For details from the *Chin shu*, see Chapter 1, section I.D.).

record in the *Wei shu*,<sup>49</sup> after Mu-mo sent an emissary to Emperor Shih-tsu 世祖 (T'ai wu-ti 太武帝 of the T'o-pa Wei) requesting to be received by him, Shih-tsu permitted Mu-mo to control the area west of An-ting and east of P'ing-liang (Fig. 1.1). Mu-mo then burned all the cities [of that area] and destroyed all the treasure and led 15,000 families to Kao-t'ien-ku 高田谷. But he was threatened by Ho-lien Ting 赫連定 of Ta Hsia 大夏, who was in the area, so Mu-mo went to Nan-an 南安 and held it. Shih-tsu sent an envoy to Mu-mo requesting him to come [to him], but Mu-mo followed the strong advice of his general Chi Pi 吉毘 not to move. Then Ho-lien Ting sent his prince leading 10,000 strong to attack Nan-an, which was in a condition of dire starvation with people eating each other. In Shen-chia 4<sup>th</sup> year (431 A.D.), Mu-mo and 500 of his clan went out and surrendered. They were sent to Shang-kuei 上邽 and Mu-mo was killed by Ho-lien Ting.

From this account, it appears that for a time around 430-431, the territory between An-ting and P'ing-liang (Ching ch'uan was near An-ting) was controlled by Mu-mo with the express consent of T'o-pa Wei Emperor Shih-tsu. At some point, Mu-mo burned the area and destroyed the treasure, then went to Kao-t'ien ku and subsequently, when opposed by Ho-lien Ting, went to Nan-an. According to the suggestion of Liu Yü-lin, since the Ching-ch'uan hoard was found near An-ting and it contained the seal of the Ch'i-fu received from Yao Hsing, it may have been buried during the time of Mu-mo's occupation of the area between An-ting and P'ing-liang. It is said that "Mu-mo burned all the cities," so the territory was in disastrous condition and Mu-mo himself seems to have been in flight from Ho-lien Ting. From these historical factors, Liu Yü-lin infers that the objects, which include the "kuei-i-hou yin" seal given to Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei in 400 by Yao Hsing, were probably buried sometime in this period of turmoil ca. 430-431.<sup>50</sup>

If one considers this possibility, it would, however, be hard to surmise how and when these items got to this particular place of burial. They could have been buried by Ch'i-fu family members, or they could have been stolen and buried later, in which case it would seemingly be impossible to determine the date of the burial of the objects. Nevertheless, the circumstantial evidence for some relation to the last days of Ch'i-fu Mu-mo remains intriguing, though not definitive.

None of these factors involving the "kuei-i-hou yin" seal provide a certain date for the Buddha altar, which could have been made anytime prior to the presumed burial date, which may or may not have been ca. 430-431. Liu Yü-lin further suggests that since Yao Hsing was a Buddhist, that this Buddha altar may have been part of the gifts sent by Yao Hsing to Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei at the time of the appointment of "Ho-chou tz'u-shih" 河州刺史 and the bestowal of the "kuei-i-hou" 歸義侯 title.<sup>51</sup> If that were the case, then the seal and the Buddha altar would probably have been made in Ch'ang-an (Yao Hsing's capital) around 400 A.D. or earlier and at least these two objects in the hoard may originally have been part of the Ch'i-fu family treasure.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> See above Chapter 1, section I.D. on Ch'i-fu Mu-mo for direct translation of this pertinent passage.

<sup>50</sup> Liu (1983), p. 76. "These artifacts were preserved in burial storage about 430-431, just before Mu-mo was destroyed."

<sup>51</sup> Liu (1983), p. 75, point #4.

<sup>52</sup> Though this historical record provides some extremely interesting circumstantial evidence, there is no way to know precisely what happened and why and by whom these objects were buried near Ching-ch'uan hsien. However, the date suggested by the bestowal of the seal (and, as suggested by Liu Yü-lin, possibly of the gift of the Buddha altar) by Yao Hsing to Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei in ca. 400 is in close correspondence with the stylistic dating of the altar based on the independent analysis of the object presented above, which concluded that the altar was probably made around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and before the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The object analysis presented here was worked out and written up on the basis of the chronology of bronze images detailed in Volume II of this series and prior to my obtaining of the



Regardless of the apparent match with some historical events, in the final analysis it is the independent analysis of the object itself that provides the most reliable date for the Buddha altar in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century or ca. 400. With regard to region of make of the Ching-ch'uan altar, as detailed in the stylistic analysis above, it reveals both similarities and differences with comparable altars from the Hopei region. However, the notable differences strongly suggest a different region of make from Hopei. Though not definite, we can surmise at this juncture that it was most likely made in Ch'ang-an.

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article by Liu Yü-lin (concerning the circumstances of the burial discovery and his study of the seal), a copy of which I only obtained through interlibrary loan in February of 2006. I mention this because I would like the reader to know that my object analysis was not influenced by Mr. Liu's article concerning the "kuei-i-hou" seal, but was done entirely independently of knowing the information in his article.



## CHAPTER THREE

### PING-LING SSU STONE CAVES: INTRODUCTION AND NICHE NO. 1

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Ping-ling ssu 炳靈寺 (Temple of Luminous Spirits) is a Buddhist stone cave temple site located in an extraordinary natural setting on the Yellow River in southern Kansu province in the Lin-hsia 臨夏 Autonomous Region (Figs. 1.1 and 3.1). It is 40 km southwest of Yung-ching hsien 永靖縣 on the north bank of the Yellow River and on the western cliff of the “Great Temple Gulch” (Ta-ssu kou 大寺溝) of Hsiao-chi shih shan 小積石山.<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays the main route of approach is from the city of Lan chou by road to the 1967 Liu chia hsia reservoir 劉家峽水庫 on the Yellow River and from there by boat up the Yellow River to the site on the north bank. Spectacular barren mountainous scenery accompanies the traveler throughout the journey, but the most unusual formations occur as one approaches the site itself. Strange conglomerate cliffs twist into the air and seem to hover over the water’s edge in fantastic shapes (color Pl. II). Steep stone cliffs rise abruptly from the north side and silt banks line the south side of the river. During seasons when the river is low and most swift, the churning whirlpool currents of the water break away hunks of the silt bank. At such seasons the small stream that flows through the Great Temple Gulch in front of the cliffs of the mountain with the caves is dried up and cracked mud flats form, adding to the strange mood created by the towering walls of the cliffs and intense heat of the desert climate. This was the way the site looked when I first visited it in June of 1982 (color Pl. III). During the season of high water the Yellow River swells and merges with the water of the small stream in the gulch, whose waters then rise up to the level of the lower caves (Fig. 3.2). A retaining wall 250 meters long and 160 meters high now keeps the water in control—a measure necessitated by the changes brought about by construction of the high dam and its consequent effects on the rising water levels in the upper Yellow River. In recent years a bridge has been built across the stream valley separating the caves from the opposite hills on the east where there are some quarters for the people protecting the site. Certainly the main impression at Ping-ling ssu is one of mysterious, out-of-this-world remoteness. Though the landscape engenders a feeling of imbalance, instability and disconnectedness, overall there is also a pleasant, calm intensity at the site.

The *Shui-ching-chu* 水經注 (The Water Classic) by Li Tao-yüan 酈道元 of the Northern Wei period (482 A.D.) is the oldest literature referring to the Ping-ling ssu area. It lauds the mysterious beauty of the locale and explains the reasons for its various names as Ts’eng shan 層山 and T’ang-shu shan 唐述山:

... North of the Ho (Yellow River) is Ts’eng shan 層山. The mountain is extremely supernatural and beautiful. The mountain peaks have stones rising several hundred *chang* 丈 (i.e., several thousand feet) high. Standing heroically straight, the peaks to the last powerfully strive upward. Looking far away and contemplating, this mountain looks like the top of mountains projecting up through the mist in the pictures of stone cliffs. In the lower section, the rocks are a precipitous wall and there are no steps for going up the banks. Among

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<sup>1</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang, editor-in-chief, *Kansu sheng wen-wu k’ao-ku yen-chiu so* and *Ping-ling ssu wen-wu pao-kuan-so*, *Ping-ling ssu i-liu-chiu k’u*, Shen-ch’ou, 1994, p.1.

the overhanging cliffs are many stone chambers. In the rooms it was like having piled up rolls of scrolls (chüan 卷)! Those ordinary persons are few who take the ferry and come [there]. In consequence [they] call this Chi-shu yen 積書岩 (Cliff of Piled-up Scrolls). Within the cliff halls [people] always saw spirit beings [shen-jen 神人] coming and going! [Ordinary persons] did not know that those fellows covered with wild goose feather clothes, who cultivated themselves and ate meager food, were immortals (hsien 仙), therefore they called them spirits (shen-kuei 神鬼). Those Ch'iang 羌 [persons] there, seeing spirits (kuei 鬼), called [this place] T'ang-shu 唐述. So this place came to have the name T'ang-shu shan, and its mysterious halls and living places were called T'ang-shu-k'u 唐述窟. Those who cherished the way [Taoists] and those clean shaven headed followers (i.e., Buddhist monks) also lived there. Therefore the *Ch'in-chou-chi* 秦州記 says: "The cliffside of the Yellow River gorge has two caves. One is called T'ang-shu-k'u. Its height is 400 feet. Two *li* west there is the Shih-liang-k'u 時亮窟, 1000 feet high, 200 feet wide, and 300 feet deep, and stores five boxes of ancient scrolls."<sup>2</sup>

In the early T'ang book *Fa-yüan chu-lin* 法苑珠林 (Grove of Pearls in the Forest of the Dharma) by Shih Tao-shih 釋道世 (668 A.D.) there is further explanation of Ping-ling ssu and references to its founding:

As for early Chin 晉初 Ho-chou's 河州 T'ang-shu ku ssu (Temple of T'ang-shu Valley) is 50 *li* northwest of present Ho-chou. Crossing the Feng-lin chin 風林津 ferry and going up the Ch'ang-i ling 長夷嶺 mountain range and gazing south, there is the famous Chi-shih shan 積石山 (Mountain of Piled-up Stones). That is the farthest place of Yü's 禹 (founder of Hsia dynasty) tribute and control. All the peaks rise up competitively and each has mysterious power. Some are like treasure pagodas; some are like storied pavilions. Pines and cedars and shining cliffs colorfully decorate and adorn the mountain peaks. [This is] mysterious work which one cannot create. What is the cause of beauty like this? Going south 20 *li* [one] comes upon a valley. The mountain was chiseled to make rooms, and connecting bridges were made to cross over the water. [The area] surrounding the temple is completely filled up by flowers and fruit trees, wild vegetables and herbs. Nowadays monks are living there. To the south above the river bank there is a stone gate. Chiseled on the stone [gate] is an inscription that says: "Established in the T'ai-shih year(s) of the Chin dynasty" (Chin T'ai-shih nien chih so li yeh 晉太始年之所立也). In the valley to the east of the temple there is one Heavenly temple (T'ien ssu 天寺). A thorough investigation does not yield even the slightest trace of it. The sound of bells is always heard, and also there are unusual monks. Therefore this valley has the name of T'ang-shu 唐述. [To the] Ch'iang 羌 [people] it means "spirits." It has been said from ancient times to the present that the various persons who enter [the mountain] of piled up stones meet with immortals (hsien 聖) and saints (sheng 仙). Going, and [still] going [further], suddenly in a daze, [they] see temples and monks. Going northeast over the mountains (ling 嶺) one comes to the Li-ch'üan (醴泉 Sweet Water spring). It is sweet and clear. Those who partake [of it] will not get old.<sup>3</sup>

From these accounts it is clear that the fantastic scenery of the area was of remarkable note and the mysterious aspect of the place was associated with "spirits and immortals" in olden times. We also learn that Ping-ling ssu in the early days was called T'ang-shu-k'u. In the T'ang period (618-906) it was called Ling-yen ssu 靈巖寺. The name Ping-ling ssu only appears in Sung times (960-1279) as a phonetization and simplification of the Tibetan name: Hsien-pa-ping-ling 仙巴炳靈, which means the 100,000 Maitreya Buddha lands.<sup>4</sup> A Ch'ing period drawing of the site shows it as a magnificent area with many peaks and a temple site with a high pagoda and many temple buildings (Fig. 3.3).

<sup>2</sup> From the *Shui-ching-chu*, chüan 2 (Ho shui), by Li Tao-yüan (ca. 482). *Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u*, Beijing, 1953, introduction, section 2; Teng (1994), p.17. The author of the *Chin-chou chi* was a person originally from Nan-an.

<sup>3</sup> From the *Fa-yüan-chu-lin*, by shih Tao-shih (668) 道世, chüan 39, in *Daizōkyō*, 53, (T 2122) p. 595a, b. Much of the imagery expressed in this excerpt conjures up the visions of the Peach Blossom Spring, the famous 3<sup>rd</sup> century literary writing by T'ao Yüan-ming that is so well known to the Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> Kansu sheng po-wu-kuan and Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u wen-wu pao-kuan-so, *Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u*, Beijing, 1982 (text written by Chang Pao-hsi); *Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u* (1953), introduction, section 2. Also see Teng Yü-hsiang, "Hei-

According to the account in the *Fa-yüan chu-lin* (T'ang), T'ang-shu-k'ü existed from the "early Chin period" (or beginning of the Chin). "Early Chin" could refer to either the Western Chin (265-317) or early in the Eastern Chin (317-420).<sup>5</sup> The text also quotes an inscription chiseled on the stone gate at the site as saying the stone gate was "founded in Chin T'ai-shih year" 晉太始年之所. There is no T'ai-shih *nien-hao* for either Western or Eastern Chin in the records. However, there is a T'ai-shih *nien-hao* in the Former Liang 前涼 (313-376 A.D.), whose territory included most of Kansu, including some south of the Yellow River at certain times.<sup>6</sup> Former Liang T'ai-shih has only one year: 355. In 356 another *nien-hao* was established. It could be that the makers of the Ping-ling ssu stone gate inscription used the dynastic name of the Chin 晉 and the local *nien-hao* of the Former Liang. The year 355 is before the Lung-hsi 龍西 area was acquired by Fu Chien 苻堅 (r. 357-385) of the Former Ch'in 前秦, who established the area as Ho-chou. Prior to that, the area was under the control of the Later Chao 後趙 (329-352), and then under the Former Liang until it came under Fu Chien's control. Since Former Liang's T'ai-shih *nien-hao* was only in usage for one year, there was also no need to add any number to the *nien-hao*, a factor that could explain the lack of a year number in the inscription, which was written only as "T'ai-shih nien." This could be one plausible explanation to be considered.

The old Ho-chou area<sup>7</sup> was a strategic location, especially from a military and transportation point of view. It has been a region of frequent ferment, rebellion, conquest and occupation by the armies of various kingdoms.<sup>8</sup> In the Yung-ning 永寧 period (301-302) it was under the control of the Western Chin (265-317). Emperor Hui-ti 惠帝 (r. 290-306) established it as Hsing-chün 興郡. The Former Liang 前涼 controlled the area for a time (probably ca. 326-327) and created six chüns in Ho-chou.<sup>9</sup> In 327, the armies of Liu Yao 劉曜 of the Former Chao (319-329) occupied Fu-han 枹罕. After Liu Yao was killed by Shih Lo in 329 A.D. and there was rebellion in Ch'ang-an, the Former Liang regained the Ho-chou area. Later, Fu Chien (r. 357-385) of the Former Ch'in established Fu-han as Ho-chou 河州. In 385, at the time of the demise of the Former Ch'in, the Hsien-pi 鮮卑 Ch'i-fu 乞伏 clan under Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen 乞伏國仁 acquired the area (see Chapter 1). At that time Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen established the kingdom known as the Western Ch'in, and Fu-han became one of the Western Ch'in strongholds. From 412-431, Fu-han was the Western Ch'in capital during the flourishing days of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an. After Chih-p'an died in 427, his son Mu-mo succeeded, but he was attacked by Northern Liang 北涼 and he lost Hsi-p'ing and Fu-han (Fig. 1.1). The kingdom demised when Mu-mo was killed by the Ta Hsia in 431 and shortly afterwards the area fell to the T'o-pa Wei.<sup>10</sup>

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rinji sekkutsu kaisetsu" (A general discourse on the Binlingsi Grottoes), in *Chūgoku sekkutsu: Heirinji*, Tokyo, 1986, p.176.

<sup>5</sup> See also Teng (1986), p.177 for discussion of the *Fa-yüan chü lin* passage.

<sup>6</sup> Two times during the long rule of Chang chün (r. 324-345), the Former Liang (ruled from Ku-tsang in Kansu) gained land south of the Yellow River. Chang-chün came near the Lung-hsi territory at the time his soldiers and horses were very strong (probably early in his reign, before 326). At that time Chang-chün "established six chüns at Ho-chou" (i.e., the Fu-han [Lin-hsia] region). At the beginning of the Hsien-ho era (around 326), Chang Chün worried about Liu Yao attacking Fu-han and he finally lost the land south of the Yellow River (to Liu Yao in 327). After Shih Lo killed Liu Yao in 329 and because of the rebellion in Ch'ang-an, Chang Chün "regained the land south of the Yellow River." Ma Yung, "Hsin-chiang so ch'u ch'ia-lu wen-shu ti tuan-tai wen-ti" (The Problem of Determining the Period of Sinkiang's Excavated Kharoṣṭhi Documents), *Wen-shih*, No.7, 1979, p. 85.

<sup>7</sup> Comprising present-day Lin-hsia district, including Lin-hsia hsien, Yung-ching hsien 永靖縣, Kuang-ho hsien 廣河縣 and Ho-cheng hsien 和政縣. Teng (1986), p. 177.

<sup>8</sup> Teng (1986), p. 177, footnote 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ma Yung (1979), p. 85. See note 6 above.

<sup>10</sup> Teng (1986), p. 177.

The site of Ping-ling ssu is associated with Kansu's Yung-ching hsien 永靖縣 and Lin-hsia 臨夏 (Fig. 3.1). This area is considered part of the so-called Lung-hsi 隴西 geographical region (also called Lung-yu 隴右), which is the area west of the Lung-shan 隴山 mountains (between Shensi and Kansu in the southeastern corner of Kansu). It is also sometimes associated with the geography west of the Yellow River, the so-called Ho-hsi 河西 area (Fig. 1.1). Though it is a little south of the main "Silk Road" communication route (the so-called Ho-hsi lu 河西路 that went west from Ch'ang-an to Chin ch'eng (Lan chou) to Ku-tsang (Wu-wei), Chang-yeh, Chiu-ch'üan and Tun-huang), it is nevertheless on the important communication route crossing the Yellow River into the Ch'ing-hai 青海 area and connecting with Chang-yeh. This is the so-called "Ho-hsi Southern Route" that was taken by Fa-hsien, the famous monk traveler, in 399-400 on his way to India, and also by T'an-wu-chieh and his group ca. 420 (see Chapter 1, and also Appendix I and Fig. 1.2). According to the *Ch'in-chou chi* 秦州記 the Western Ch'in Ch'i-fu kingdom spent three years in building a large bridge (height of 50 *ch'ang*) over the Yellow River at Yung-ching hsien, near Ping-ling ssu. It still existed in the Sui and T'ang periods. This bridge greatly facilitated transportation in the area around Ping-ling ssu.<sup>11</sup>

The present site of Ping-ling ssu is divided into three areas, designated by the Chinese as the 1) upper temple area, 2) lower temple area and 3) the small caves scattered in between. The lower temple area is within the "Great Temple Gulch", the valley of the small stream which flows into the Yellow River in front of the caves. Fig. 3.4 shows the cave site in 1952, prior to the building of the dam on the Yellow River in 1967. The total number of existing caves and niches at the entire site at present is 196, most at the principal cliff or lower temple area on the west side of the small stream. There are a total of 184 numbered caves and niches (40 caves and 144 niches).<sup>12</sup> The lower temple area has a total of 694 images, both large and small, 82 of which are in stucco. The others are carved from the fine grain reddish sandstone of the native rock. There are numerous remains of wall paintings from various periods (about 912 square meters total at Ping-ling ssu).<sup>13</sup> The colossal seated Buddha (27 meters high) in Fig. 3.4 is considered to date from the T'ang dynasty, but with later repair. Excavation of the area below the caves and the colossal Buddha revealed the foundation and pillar sockets of a wooden temple structure which once covered the colossal Buddha.

The first report of Ping-ling ssu in this century was by Prof. Feng Kuo-shui 馮國瑞 of Hsi-peì Ta-hsüeh 西北大學 University, who in 1951 investigated the site, which was very difficult to reach in those days. He subsequently wrote the first report on the caves.<sup>14</sup> In the early fall of 1952 the first official investigation team organized by the Central Cultural Bureau (Chung-yang wen-hua pu 中央文化部) and composed of experts from Tun-huang and Beijing met in Lan chou. The team of thirteen was headed by Ch'ang Shu-hung 常書鴻 (Director of the Mokao Academy at Tun-huang) and included Tuan Wen-chieh 段文傑 (later to become the Director of the Mokao Academy), Wu Tso-jen

<sup>11</sup> Chang (1982), p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> The caves and niches span the period from the Western Ch'in to the Ming dynasty and are divided as follows: Western Ch'in: 2 caves; Late Northern Wei: 7 caves and 30 niches; Sui: 4 caves and 1 niche; Flourishing T'ang (1<sup>st</sup> half): 6 caves and 58 niches; Flourishing T'ang (2<sup>nd</sup> half) 8 caves and 46 niches; mid and late T'ang: 3 caves and 10 niches; Ming: 2 caves and 2 niches. Kansu sheng wen-hua chü wen-wu kung-tso tui, "T'iao ch'a Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u ti hsin shou hu", *Wen-wu*, 1963, No. 10, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Teng (1986), p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> Feng Kuo-shui 馮國瑞, *Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u k'an-ch'a chi* 炳靈寺石窟勘察記, 1951 (the first book on Ping-ling ssu). Prof. Feng also wrote an article "Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u ti li shih yüan yüan wei ti li huan ching 炳靈寺石窟的歷史淵源與地理環境", *Wen-wu ts'an kao tz'u liao*, 1953, No. 1. See Wu Tso-jen, "Heirinji sekkutsu: jo" (Ping-ling ssu Grottoes: Preface), in *Chügoku sekkutsu: Heirinji*, Tokyo, 1986, p. 171, and Yüeh Pang-hu (1986), p. 174, note 2.

吳作人, Feng Kuo-shui 馮國瑞 and others.<sup>15</sup> They set out from Lan chou on September 18, 1952. Much of the latter part of the journey of 20 km from Yung-ching (Fig. 3.1) was on horseback and finally on foot, due to the treacherous steep terrain. They decided to take sheep-skin boats for the return journey and arrived back at Lan chou September 29th. Using two 16 m [52½'] ladders this team made the initial measurements, sketches and photos of the site, but were unable to reach Cave 169, high on the cliff above the head of the colossal Buddha. According to Wu Tso-jen, lama monks were still there at the site and helped to hold the shaking ladders.<sup>16</sup> In 1953 some of the data was published in a small monograph.<sup>17</sup> Fig. 3.4 was taken at the time of the 1952 investigation. In 1955 the Ping-ling ssu Wen-wu Protection Office was established, and in 1961 the government designated Ping-ling ssu as a National Important Cultural Object to be protected.<sup>18</sup>

In 1963 (4<sup>th</sup> month) there was a second official investigation, this time by the Kansu Province Cultural Group (Kansu sheng wen-wu kung-tso-tui). This group went up into Cave 169 (6 meters above the ground level) for the first time and found the famous Western Ch'in 西秦 Chien-hung 建弘 1<sup>st</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year (420 or 424 A.D.) inscription. About half of the caves did not have the steps constructed, so the team used rope or long wooden ladders. During the one and a half month period this team completed work on 184 caves with photographs, measurements and records.<sup>19</sup> The results were reported in a *Wen-wu* article in 1963.<sup>20</sup> In 1967 the Lin-chia dam and reservoir to control the Yellow River was built and the government set aside funds for the protection of Ping-ling ssu. Experts and technicians were sent for further work at the site and established the numbering system for the caves and constructed some wooden stairs and walkways to reach the caves. Their work was published in 1982.<sup>21</sup> In 1986 a joint China-Japan publication (*Heirinji sekkutsu*, part of the *Chūgoku sekkutsu* series), a major work with all color photographs and articles by experts, greatly facilitated study of the site. Most recently, an important monograph specifically on the early Cave 169 by the Kansu sheng wen-wu k'ao-ku yen-chiu-so and the Ping-ling ssu wen-wu pao-kuan-so with Teng Yü-hsiang as editor-in-chief was published in 1994.

The earliest remains at Ping-ling ssu appear to be the so-called Niche No.1 containing a standing monumental Buddha image; Cave 169, the largest cave at Ping-ling ssu and the one with extensive and important remains of early Chinese Buddhist sculpture and paintings as well as a number of inscriptions; a central pillar cave; and the cave of the Wild Pheasant Gulch. The discovery of the Western Ch'in Chien-hung 建弘 inscription in Cave 169 created a stir in the world of Chinese Buddhist art studies, since it is the first major inscription to confirm an early date for surviving images in one of the cave temples of the Kansu area, an area famous in Chinese history for the early flourishing of Buddhism in China. Other inscriptions in the cave offer added data for dating, for the iconography and for the names of donors and monks. These records provide the background for understanding the making of the earliest Bud-

<sup>15</sup> Wu Tso-jen (1986), p. 171.

<sup>16</sup> Wu Tso-jen (1986), p. 171.

<sup>17</sup> Chung-kuo jen-min cheng fu, wen-hua pu, she hui hua shih yeh, kuan li chü (compiled and printed), *Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u*, Beijing, 1953 (text written by Cheng Chen-to).

<sup>18</sup> Yüeh Pang-hu, "Heirinji sekkutsu: jo" (Ping-ling ssu Grottoes: Preface), in *Chūgoku sekkutsu: Heirinji*, Tokyo, 1986, p. 175.

<sup>19</sup> Yüeh Pang-hu (1986), p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Kansu sheng wen-hua chü wen-wu kung-tso tui, "T'iao ch'a Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u ti hsin shou hu", *Wen-wu*, 1963, No. 10, pp.1-5, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Kansu sheng po-wu-kuan, Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u wen-wu pao-kuan-so, *Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u*, Beijing, 1982 (text by Chang Pao-hsi).



dhist images at Ping-ling ssu. The cave site continued to be more or less active until the Ch'ing dynasty. Besides the early remains in Cave 169, there are other caves and niches with surviving sculpture and paintings from the Northern Wei, Northern Chou, Sui, T'ang, Hsi-Hsia, Yüan and Ming periods.

The study presented here begins with the Niche No.1 Buddha, followed by an extensive study of the all the sculptures and wall paintings of Cave 169 and the cave in the Wild Pheasant Gulch (Yeh-chi kou). The intent here is to determine as much as possible a close chronology for all these works, to examine the inscriptions, relate the art to possible sources within and outside China, and discuss the issues of iconography as they pertain to the art. This study builds on the pioneering work of Chinese scholars, particularly Teng Yü-hsiang and Chang Pao-hsi, but seeks to go deeper into all these issues and especially to carry the analytic investigation into the realm of more rigorous dating in the formation of a chronology that, in turn, will provide much of the basis for working out the chronology of the other cave temple art of Kansu province in this early period. Further, new conclusions concerning the iconography of specific images and the apparent schemes and programs offered by the imagery in the cave are studied in relation to Buddhist texts and to relevant examples of Gandhāran Buddhist art, which in turn is informed by these early images at Ping-ling ssu.

## II. NICHE NO.1: MONUMENTAL BUDDHA STATUE

The large open niche called Niche No.1 appears on the natural cliff in the southernmost area of the site about 10-some meters above the ground at the foot of "Sisters Peak" (Tzu-mei feng 姊妹峰), the spectacular twin pinnacles near the bank of the Yellow River.<sup>22</sup> The view in Fig.3.2 looks south down the flooded valley stream in front of the caves towards Sisters Peak with the Yellow River beyond. Fig.3.5 shows an artist's sketch of the niche and its location, and Fig.3.6 is the view from Niche No.1 looking north up the valley towards the colossal Buddha and the main area of caves in the distance. Niche No.1 was apparently covered by a wooden structure for which holes can be seen in the rock (Figs. 3.7, 3.8, 3.9), but only the remains of a few pieces of wood existed when the niche was discovered. However, part of the overhanging cliff has acted as a kind of roof that protected the images through the centuries (Figs. 3.7, 3.8).

When this niche was first photographed in the early 1950's the Buddha image was covered with Ming period stucco and attended by two free-standing Bodhisattvas (Figs. 3.7, 3.8). In 1964 this repair covering was removed from the standing Buddha,<sup>23</sup> revealing the original image (H. 4.6 meters [15.09 ft.]), which was made of a stone core covered with clay and stucco. The two Bodhisattvas were completely made in the Ming period. Because the Buddha image's stone core could not be transported, there was an effort to preserve the work at the site, but the Cultural Revolution of 1965-1975 put an end to it and eventually the site was covered by the rising waters of the dam. Now we have only the photographs taken of the site before the flooding of the area.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Teng (1994), p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Teng (1986), p. 178.

<sup>24</sup> Chang Pao-hsi, "Ping-ling ssu ti 1, 90, 133 k'u te ch'ing li wei yen-chiu," *Tun-huang yen-chiu*, 2003, No. 4, pp. 30-31. According to an earlier article, Mr. Chang notes that the images were removed, but they were apparently not completely preserved in their original shape (Chang Pao-hsi, "Heirinji no Seishin kutsu" (The Western Qin Binlingsi Grottoes), in *Chūgoku Sekkutsu: Heirinji*, Tokyo, 1986, p. 196). This may refer to some partial removal and to the removal of the Bodhisattvas.

### A. *Description and Technical, Stylistic and Comparative Analysis*

Despite its somewhat damaged condition with loss of the hands, ears, and the edges of the drapery at the neck and sides, most of the original standing Buddha image was found intact and in fresh and excellent condition, preserved for centuries by the repair covering (Figs. 3.9-3.12). There are some cut lines around the edges of the image made at the time of the Ming repair, but these did not do major damage to the statue (only the edges of the collar fold and the hems of the saṅghātī raised by the arms were lost).

#### 1. *Technique*

The technique by which this large Buddha was made is an especially pertinent and important factor. The image was fashioned in high relief with a carved stone inner core that was covered by clay and then stucco.<sup>25</sup> The wood that appears at the broken part of the forearms may be repair, but it would seem that the original stone did not extend forward for the forearms and hands, so these may have been made by a wooden armature covered with clay and stucco. The stone inner core type relief sculpture is a special technique that has very limited usage in China and elsewhere. Stone inner core technique is different from the fully finished stone images, such as one sees at Yün-kang, Lung-men and in many later caves temples in China, which are completely finished sculptures with all details in the stone before being covered by a thin layer of stucco and/or by paint. Stone core is not a completed image, but only a general shaping of the stone on which the details are completed by a layer of clay and stucco and then painted. There are a few other stone core type relief sculptures at Ping-ling ssu in addition to this Niche No. 1 Buddha, some in the early Cave 169 (Groups 4, 18, the five seated Buddhas of Group 16), as well as in other sites in Kansu. These would all appear to predate the wood, straw and clay type sculptures, which also occur in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169. The change from stone core to wood, straw and clay may be a matter of the particular technical training of the artists working at the particular time and it may also involve an economic factor. The stone core technique is more labor intensive compared with that of using wood, straw and clay for the structure, and this may have been a factor in soon abandoning the technique in favor of the easier wood, straw and clay method.

Prototypes for the stone core technique as seen in the Sixteen Kingdoms period Kansu images are few. The most prominent are the two colossal Buddhas of Bāmiyān (Fig. 3.15). It is not a technique used at the cave temple sites of the Northern Silk Road, or, as far as we know now, in the clay and stucco imagery of Gandhāra and Bactria. Even at Bāmiyān it does not seem to have been used other than for the colossal images. The particular linkage of the Niche No.1 Buddha with the East Great Buddha at Bāmiyān is an important issue to which we will return later.

#### 2. *Posture and Hand Positions*

This impressive, 15-foot high Buddha stands frontally straight with the legs and feet moderately separated (Fig. 3.9). The image is reported to have been standing on a lotus pedestal, now mostly ruined and not visible in available photographs.<sup>26</sup> The right forearm seems to have been raised to waist level and the left forearm positioned slightly lower than waist level. Most likely the right hand was making

<sup>25</sup> Chang Pao-hsi (2003), p. 31-32.

<sup>26</sup> Chang Pao-hsi (2003), p. 31.

the abhayā mudrā and the left hand was either holding the hem of the garment with hand lowered, palm facing inward, as in the images in Figs. 3.13 (first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century) and 3.16 (late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century), or turned over with the palm facing upward, as with the images from Gandhāra in Fig. 3.14a or from China in Fig. 3.19 (dated 443).

In general posture the Niche No.1 Buddha resembles the posture of the standing Buddha in the Kyoto National Museum of ca. 1st half of the 4th century (Fig. 3.13),<sup>27</sup> though it is a much smaller image and there are some differences in style, which will be discussed below. The general body form and the positioning of the arms in the Niche No. 1 Buddha image also resembles some Gandhāran standing stone Buddhas of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Buddha in the relief in Fig. 3.14a, and the Buddhas in the stone platform relief from Takht-i-Bāhī in Fig. 3.14b. This Takht-i-Bāhī relief is an important remains from the Peshawar area datable within the Gandhāran chronology to ca. 250-350 (see below Chapter 8). Compared with the East Great Buddha at Bāmiyān, which was dated in Vol. I to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>28</sup> the vertical position of the upper arms is similar (Fig. 3.15), but the left arm of the Niche No.1 Buddha is lower, though not as low as the left arms of some of the Style I Buddhas at Rawak Stupa (Khotan) of ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.16).<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, the posture and arm positioning of the Niche No. 1 Buddha may have the closest similarity to the so-called “King Aśoka” Buddhas, which were popular in South China during the Eastern Chin Dynasty (317-420). Though no original Eastern Chin “King Aśoka” type Buddhas are now known, the later copies from Cheng-tu, Szechwan of the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century may be considered representative of the type (Fig. 3.17).<sup>30</sup> As discussed below, there are other features (such as the drapery) that seem to link the Niche No.1 Buddha with the King Aśoka type image. Also, in general, the frontality and overall proportioning of the torso and limbs relates to the wooden Buddha from Tumshuk-Tagh in Fig. 3.18 dated in Vol. II to ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> The links with these various images clearly suggest a dating for the Niche No.1 Buddha to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, probably the latter half. The bronze Buddha dated 443 from the Northern Wei (Fig. 3.19) has a similar posture, but the form is more gently proportioned, yet stiffer in its stance, and the drapery configurations are more complex. The 443 image reveals a more integrated sense in the body and limbs, less foreign tendency in the revealed naturalism of the limbs and a greater degree of freedom and outward movement in the arm positions—all features of an evolved and matured style.

### 3. *Body Form*

The form of the body of the Niche No.1 Buddha is sophisticated, naturalistic, and rather clearly simplified. It does not have much muscular definition of the chest and arms, but it does have a rather extraordinarily subtle indication of the knees and naturalistic shape of the legs. The shoulders are relatively wide, but the body trunk appears short and straight with a full mid-section with a strong sense of volume. This style of short upper torso with smooth, non-muscular, rounded upper arms

<sup>27</sup> For discussion and dating of this image, see Vol. II: Rhie (2002), pp. 261-265.

<sup>28</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 228-234 for the Eastern Great Buddha. The issue of the dating of the two colossal Buddhas at Bāmiyān is one that has been considered by many scholars. In Vol. I, I gave a preliminary study of the Eastern Great Buddha (Cave 155) and presented evidences for dating the Eastern Great Buddha to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The issue of colossal Buddhas in the period of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century will be further addressed in various places in Vol. III below and in Vol. IV.

<sup>29</sup> For the dating of the Rawak sculptures, see Vol. I: Rhie (1999), pp. 287-292.

<sup>30</sup> The King Aśoka Buddha is discussed in Vol. II. See Rhie (2002), pp. 156-168 and figs.1.20-1.31.

<sup>31</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 567-569.

relates to the shapes appearing in the seated Buddhas from Lou-lan (Fig. 2.20). Despite the fact that these Lou-lan relief images are small and worn, there is perceptible a comparable degree of rounded volume and manner of portraying the area of the arm-shoulder juncture which seems to suggest a similar stylistic approach in each. The Niche No. 1 Buddha has a more developed shape to the body than the bronze standing Buddha in the Kyoto National Museum (Fig. 3.13) and reveals more of the natural shaping of the torso, arms and legs than that bronze image. Compared with the Style I standing Buddhas at Rawak (Fig. 3.16), the naturalistic tendencies and the subtlety of the leg shapes in both are closely similar. Some of the slight differences could be due to the Chinese adaptation, which produces not only a more rigid figure, but also one with more lyrical movement in the drapery. The naturalistic tendency in the body of the Niche No. 1 Buddha shows a style prior to the more unified, refined and svelte shaping of the body that parallels the development of the Gupta style in India and appears to some degree in Chinese imagery in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and in the 443 standing bronze Maitreya (Fig. 3.19). With respect to the King Aśoka style image, though it is a later copy (Fig. 3.17), in general it can be said that the degree of roundness in the arms, the short torso, and clarity of the hip joints and leg structure, as well as the slightly wide stance are all remarkably similar in each.

In sum, with regard to the body shape, the Niche No. 1 Buddha relates to the Rawak Style I images of late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century, but it seems more developed than the Kyoto National Museum bronze image, probably from northern China of ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It has considerable linkage with the King Aśoka Buddhas famous in South China during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (as indicated by mid-6<sup>th</sup> century copies), and it lacks the more Gupta style elements seen in the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 standing Buddhas and 443 Maitreya image. The style is considerably closer to the 4<sup>th</sup> century images such as the Rawak Style I Buddha in Fig. 3.16 and the Tumshuk wooden Buddha in Fig. 3.18, than it is to any of the Cave 169 standing Buddhas and the 443 bronze Maitreya (Fig. 3.19). Thus its natural style tendency is in the direction of earlier images of the 4<sup>th</sup> century rather than with images of the earlier part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4. *Drapery*

The drapery is gauze-like and fits closely over the form (Fig. 3.9-3.11). The drapery is much more revealing of the body than the drapery on the Kyoto National Museum bronze Buddha (Fig. 3.13) and is very close to the style of the Rawak Style I Buddha (Fig. 3.16). The light, deft fold lines follow a symmetrical, U-shaped pattern down the front of the image. Though known in the images of Gandhāra and Swat, this scheme is more popular in the Mathurā school lineage as known in some images of the Kushana, late Kushana and Gupta period statues.<sup>32</sup> However, there is slight variation in spacing of the folds of the Niche No.1 Buddha, so they are not as rigidly formalized as generally seen in the Mathurā school examples.

The patterns of the folds in long, diagonal lines from the arms and over the thighs and legs is a scheme related to that of the Kyoto National Museum standing Buddha (Fig. 3.13) and is seen in the early Tumshuk-Tagh standing wooden Buddha in Fig. 3.18. This particular patterning also appears in the copies of the King Aśoka Buddha image (Fig. 3.17). It seems to be a mode in usage in the 4<sup>th</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For example, see Rhie (2002), fig. 2.66d.

century and is different from the more complicated and broken linear schemes of the other standing Buddhas seen in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and as known in the so-called King Udayana type image.<sup>33</sup>

The folds of the outer garment (*saṅghāṭī*) are a subtle and varied mixture of incised lines and slightly molded, raised creases. Some of the folds are flat pleats similar to the kind used in the sculptures of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍā and in the Rawak Style I Buddhas (Fig. 3.16). Mostly, the folds have the effect of being paired, or are “double-incised lines”, but this is not the case throughout. The double incised line technique is known in Gandhāran sculpture, such as seen in Figs. 3.14a and b, and is quite pervasive by the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Gandhāra. Double incised lines can also be seen in the painting of the main crossed ankled Maitreya painting of Cave 38 at Kizil, dated in Volume. II to ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 3.20a, b).<sup>34</sup>

In the Niche No.1 Buddha the manner of carving the folds on the upper chest and part of the arms does not create simple double-incised lines, but a sharply peaked narrow crease between the incised lines. The technique is the same as used in some Gandhāran stone sculpture as a simplified way to create the effect of a wide, flat, raised fold alternating with a sharp crease. When the flat fold is not raised very high the effect of its importance is diminished and that of the edges increases, creating a more linear effect to the folds, such as seen in the Ping-ling ssu Niche No.1 Buddha. The Niche No. 1 Buddha is a rare example, however, and I have not seen a comparable work with this kind of subtle mixture. It is probably ultimately related to the Gandhāran tradition as it is coming into China and interpreted by Chinese artists, but there may be more factors at work, such as influences from South China. Furthermore, a few of the flat folds have a delicate incised line near the edge. This technique is only used on a few folds over the abdomen section, but it is one that is seen used more consistently on the bronze seated abhaya mudrā Buddha formerly in the Nitta collection (Fig. 4.19) and dated in Volume II to ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The more prevalent usage on the Buddha of the Ching-ch’uan altar (Fig. 2.16), dated above to second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or more specifically to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps suggests the development of this technique, which appears to be related to works of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The excessively low cowl of the neck fold in the Niche No. 1 Buddha is unusual (Figs. 3.9, 3.10). It dips in a deep U-shape in the center of the upper chest. The closest comparable examples appear in some wall paintings of Bāmīyān, such as those in Cave 165 (near the Eastern Great Buddha) in Fig. 3.21, suggested to date to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or into the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Volume I.<sup>35</sup>

The long, gentle, outward curve of the contours of the robe’s edges as they fall from the arms is an exceedingly interesting feature. The outwardly curved patterning of these edges is unlike the straight or inwardly curved patterns generally seen in standing Buddha images from India, Gandhāra and Central Asia. In Chinese standing Buddha images, such as Kyoto National Museum bronze in Fig. 3.13 and the 443 Maitreya in Fig. 3.19, there is a some flair or projection of the hems hanging from the arms, but they have either an inward curvature or a stiff, straight patterning.

Not only does the drapery hanging from the arms flare outward, but the bottom hems of the two under robes also flare outward like a pleated fan to each side (Figs. 3.9, 3.11). The under robes have three or four flat pleats, all equal in size and each making a small zigzag turn at the folded edge. This extraordinary design, not even seen in the later standing Buddhas from Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu,

<sup>33</sup> For discussion of the King Udayana image, see Vol. II (Rhie (2002), pp. 432-445 and figs. 2.73a-g and 2.74c and d).

<sup>34</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 658-666.

<sup>35</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 227-228.

may have a progenitor in the mildly flared hems of the cross-ankled seated Maitreya Bodhisattva in Cave 38 at Kizil (Figs. 3.20a, b) of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It may also reflect elements from South China, as we can surmise from the figures on the bronze mirror in the Kyoto National Museum (Fig. 3.22, 3.23). This mirror was discussed in Volume II as probably dating from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (early to middle Eastern Chin).<sup>36</sup> Though the figures on the mirror are hard to exactly identify, it is clear that the standing images wear drapery with flared hems. This contour is matched in the Niche No. 1 Buddha, though the pleated hems are different. It may be that we can see some of the early Chinese adaptation of the Indian and Central Asian modes, perhaps as evolving in South China. The bronze mirror from the South gives us this clue at the present. Further, the hem of the outer robe across the front of the legs of the Niche No.1 Buddha moves with a supple and thin edge across the legs near the ankles in a manner similar to the edges of the King Aśoka Buddha copies, imagery also associated with South China (Fig. 3.17). The pronounced outward flair of the hems of the robes becomes well known in the images of Yün-kang in Cave 6 from around the 480's and from that time continues as the major mode in Northern Wei Buddha imagery. The hems of the outer robe as they fall from the raised arms of the Niche No.1 Buddha fall with some of the tunnel shape noted in 4<sup>th</sup> century Mathurā and Rawak images (as discussed in Volume I). But in this Niche No.1 Buddha it is the outward flaring movement that is not seen in any of these Indian or Central Asian examples, and can perhaps be considered to be an artistic manner that the Chinese appreciated and developed in their Buddhist art. It is well known from the written records from South China regarding the making of Buddhist images, that the artistic style of Buddha images was critically assessed and that the famous sculptor Tai K'uei was able to achieve a style that was very pleasing to the people. In some cases, it is known that he pondered the image many years to achieve the desired form.

From the drapery we see the remarkable qualities of the Niche No.1 Buddha. It stands alone in showing some elements that can possibly be considered developing ideas within China while still keeping much that is foreign. The links with South China (and also possibly with Kizil) in the flared drapery form and in the resemblances to the King Aśoka Buddha type are noteworthy and of some consequence in understanding the early Buddha imagery in China in a substantially large icon.

## 5. Head

The head of this Buddha is a remarkable style (Fig. 3.10, 3.12). It is proportionately large—more so than seen in any of the Buddhas in Cave 169, including that of the Group 6 Amitāyus (Fig. 6.8a, b), dated 424 (or 420). Large proportioning for the head is a characteristic of many of the early bronze Buddhas, such as the 338 A.D. Asian Art Museum Buddha (Fig. 2.2), the Ku-kung Museum standing Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 2.3) and the Kyoto National Museum standing Buddha (Fig. 3.13) and others. However, a closer look reveals characteristics that can be more precisely matched with other examples and help in establishing the dating parameters of the Niche No.1 image.

The face is rectangular with broad cheeks and full jowls. The planes of the face tend to be smooth and hard, except for the softly rounded jaws and chin, a distinguishing characteristic of this style. Sharp-edged lines and contours delineate the facial features, adding a large measure of linear clarity and abstraction to the face. All the features are quite large, the eyes notably so. The eyes are long and appear quite widely open, though with large eyelids. These eyelids are indicated by a delicate line

<sup>36</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 185.



whose curve echoes the arching, semicircular sweep of the upper rim of the eye socket and dramatically curved eyebrows. The eyelid is about as wide as the space between the lid and the eyebrow, creating an open appearance which emphasizes the large eyes in the face. Above the wide, arching planes of the eye socket, the eyebrows sweep with a bold curve from nose to temples. This method of shaping the area around the eyes has the same basic style and technique as the stucco Buddha heads known especially from Haḍḍa and Taxila, and seen as well in the monumental clay and stucco Buddha heads of Miran M II (Fig. 3.24), discussed in Volume I as dating to the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>37</sup> The area around the eyes of the Niche No.1 Buddha is treated in a way similar to the style in the Swāt Dīpaṃkara stone Buddha in Fig. 3.26, dated ca. mid 4<sup>th</sup> century in Volume I,<sup>38</sup> and as seen in the Karadong (near Khotan) wall paintings of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.27).

Although the tip of the nose is broken, it can still be seen that the nose was aquiline, high-bridged, long, and sharply edged. The long nose is a characteristic of the Swat Buddha in Fig. 3.26 and the sharp edges relate to the styles of the heads from Tumshuk Toqquz-Sarai Temple “I” and “J” (Fig. 3.28). The mouth, reflecting the clear curves of the arcs around the eyes, is broad and a little thin with cleanly drawn contour lines of the same delicate edge and curved sweep as seen in the eyes. Instead of soft modeling, the planes of the mouth, though curved in an engaging smile, are crisp and abstract. This kind of abstract shape relates to the mouth style of the 338 Buddha (Fig. 2.2) and the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha (Fig. 2.4), though it is a little sharper and stretched wider than either. The fragment of an early wall painting (probably early 4<sup>th</sup> century) showing the upper part of a Buddha from the site of Niya (Fig. 3.25) has a similar style in the thin, wide mouth as well as in the broad, full face, though the eyes are a bolder kind with upward curvature, as known in some Gandhāran images.<sup>39</sup>

The forehead of the Niche No.1 Buddha is quite narrow, in contrast to the wide area of the eyes. The hairline is clean and precise and curves far back into the temples. The hair on the cranium fits tightly with very little additional relief. The abstract wave design is portrayed in narrow strips created by closely spaced parallel incised lines that form circular swirl patterns. This kind of patterning is descended from the abstract patterns of 4<sup>th</sup> century stucco sculptures from greater Gandhāra and Central Asia. The delicate linear treatment of the hair and its abstract patterning is similar in general style, if not specific patterning, with the Swāt Buddha in Fig. 3.26 and with the Buddha heads from Temples “J” and “I” at Toqquz-Sarai at Tumshuk (Fig. 3.28), discussed in Volume II as dating to the first half of the 4th century. It relates as well to sculpture from Gandhāra and Western Central Asia, especially of the stucco schools.<sup>40</sup>

The uṣṇīṣa is rounded like a ball and appears to have individual protruding curl-shapes, totally different from the designs of the hair on the cranium. The manner of using two different patterns (or pattern and plain surface) for the hair on the uṣṇīṣa and cranium occurs in many images of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, including those in China, such as the Kyoto National Museum standing Bronze Buddha in Fig. 3.13 and the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha (Fig. 2.4). With respect to the usage of individual hair curls on the uṣṇīṣa, the Niche No. 1 Buddha is similar to the form seen on the copies of the King Aśoka images (Fig. 3.17) and on the Parinirvāṇa Buddha painting in Kizil Cave 38, shown in Volume II to date ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 385-389.

<sup>38</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 297; fig. 4.44 and color pl. IX.

<sup>39</sup> Rhie (1999), figs. 5.47a, b.

<sup>40</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 502-505, 507-509, 575; figs. 3.4a-d, 3.4c, 3.8

<sup>41</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.53c and p. 665.



Amidst this delicate refinement of abstract features, the only softened area is around the jowls and neck. The neck apparently has three lines in the stucco,<sup>42</sup> a feature that does not seem to occur in the seated Buddhas of the small bronze altars of the Sixteen Kingdoms period, but is known in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. sculpture from Palmyra (before 256 A.D.), the Miran wall paintings (ca. mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century),<sup>43</sup> and appears on the standing wooden Buddha from Tumshuk-Tagh (Fig. 3.18). Remains of black painted lines appear on the eyebrows and for the large irises of the eyes, a technique well known in the clay and stucco sculptures of Gandhāra, particularly Haḍḍa, and Central Asia.

Overall, the style of the head of the Niche No.1 Buddha has some relation with the style of the 338 Buddha (Fig. 2.2), despite it being a smaller image and one from a different region (northeast), but the Niche No.1 Buddha appears to be more developed. The similarities with the head of the wooden standing Buddha from Tumshuk-Tagh in Fig. 3.18, the Niya painted Buddha (Fig. 3.25), and the heads from Tumshuk Toqquz-Sarai (Fig. 3.28) suggest a dating for the Niche No. 1 Buddhas around the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, while the heads from Miran II (Fig. 3.24), the Swāt Buddha in Fig. 3.26 and the Karadong painting in Fig. 3.27 point towards a dating in the mid or second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6. Wall Paintings

There is mention of the existence of some remains of wall paintings in Niche No.1, though there was damage to the surface of the wall with the early wall paintings.<sup>44</sup> Chang Pao-hsi identifies the figures as “kung-yang” people (donors) standing below at the sides of the Buddha. Those on the Buddha’s right side are relatively clear and the first figure is a monk. Those on the left side are not as clear, but the first person also seems to be a monk. The Buddha’s body has remains of white paint, but there are no remains of color on the robe and no remains of a body halo.<sup>45</sup>

## III. CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE REGARDING THE NICHE NO.1 BUDDHA

There has been little study of the Niche No.1 Buddha with regard to ascertaining its date. Teng Yü-hsiang places the image in the period of the Western Ch’in, before the 420 dated niche in Cave 169.<sup>46</sup> Chang Pao-hsi calls the image Western Ch’in’s original stone core clay and stucco standing Buddha and relates it to the style of the Western Ch’in statues in Cave 169, especially the standing Buddha of Group 18.<sup>47</sup>

### A. Dating and Sources of Style

As pointed out above with regard to specific elements, stylistically the Niche No.1 Buddha relates in some pertinent ways to certain elements seen in the Haḍḍa/Taxila stucco Buddha heads of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Dīpaṃkara Buddha from Swāt of ca. mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Rawak Style I Buddhas, the Lou-lan wooden niche Buddhas (the latter two both of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century), the clay and stucco heads of Tumshuk Toqquz-Sarai Temples “J” and “I”, the wooden standing Buddha from

<sup>42</sup> Chang (2003), p. 31.

<sup>43</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 232.

<sup>44</sup> Chang (2003), p. 32.

<sup>45</sup> Chang (2003), p. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Teng (1994), p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> Chang (1982), p. 6; Chang (2003), p. 31.

Tumshuk-Tagh, the wall painting from Niya (all of ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century), and to the Kizil Cave 38 paintings, Miran M II sculptures, and the Karadong wall paintings, all ca. mid or 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. With regard to images in China there is some connection with the 338 bronze Buddha, the Kyoto National Museum standing bronze Buddha (1<sup>st</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century), the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha (ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century), later copies of the King Aśoka Buddha, and with the Ching-ch'uan Buddha of ca. last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. These stylistic links suggest that the Niche No.1 Buddha could generally be dated around the mid or the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps most plausibly around middle part of Phase II, ca. 375-385. This would place the image in the period of the Former Ch'in domination over the area or possibly into the early years of the Western Ch'in. In either case there is no apparent contradiction to the statements in the *Fa-yüan-chi-lin* that Ping-ling ssu is an "early Chin" 晉初 site and the stone gate inscription saying that the stone gate was "established in Chin 晉 T'ai-shih" (possibly 355 A.D. as discussed in the introduction to this chapter). These records indicate, as much as their ambiguity allows, that the site was active during the earlier part of the Chin 晉 period, so a mid-4th to third quarter of the 4th century date is certainly possible for Buddhist imagery at the site.

### B. *Oldest Surviving Monumental Buddha Image in China*

The importance of this image, other than it being a magnificent work in and of itself, increases by virtue of its probability of being the earliest monumental image (15 feet in height) in China's history to survive, at least to around 1964. It can probably be classified among the category of colossal images, though not of the great colossal size. The Niche No.1 Buddha takes a prime place among the oldest monumental or colossal Buddhas yet known in China proper, the others only known from literary records describing the colossal images in South China, usually described as 16 or 18 feet in height. The Niche No.1 Buddha not only joins the numerous small bronze altar images as early survivors of Chinese Buddhist art, it also shows that there is considerable difference between the larger scale images and the small scale bronze images, a factor I had noted in an earlier study.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, the Niche No.1 Buddha is immensely important in the history of Chinese Buddhist art with respect to the making of the colossal type image. From this Buddha we can perhaps catch some glimpse of how the famous colossal standing Buddha image at Tao-an's monastery, the T'an-hsi ssu in Hsiang-yang (Hunan), may have appeared. It was said from written accounts to have been a 16-foot "wondrous" gilded image that walked.<sup>49</sup> It was made from 10,000 catties of copper sent to Tao-an as a gift by the governor of Liang chou (central Kansu), Yang Hung-chung 楊弘忠 and was completed in 375 after almost one year.<sup>50</sup> Because it was a "wondrous" image and also since the image was made from copper sent from Liang-chou, we could reasonably expect that this image must have been known in the Kansu region as a famous Buddha statue. One can think that other Buddhist monasteries would like to have had a similar image, so it may have been an influential model. These two Buddha statues, Tao-an's "wondrous" walking Buddha of ca. 375 A.D. and the Niche No.1 Buddha at Ping-ling ssu are

<sup>48</sup> M. Rhie, "Some Aspects of 5<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Buddhist Images with Sculpture from North India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia," *East and West*, n.s. Vol. 26, Nos. 3-4 (Sept.-Dec., 1976), p. 460-461.

<sup>49</sup> Tao-an's famous gilded "walking" Buddha was smashed by imperial edict in 575 A.D. by Emperor Wu of the Northern Chou during his persecution of Buddhism. Rhie (2002), pp. 84-85.

<sup>50</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 83-85.

probably China's two oldest colossal (16-foot) Buddha images, and fortunately we can at least still have the chance to see the photographs of the actual Ping-ling ssu Niche No.1 Buddha.

### C. *Possible King Aśoka Buddha Image and Relation to Eastern Chin in the South*

The Niche No.1 Buddha may also be an example of the so-called King Aśoka Buddha. As discussed above, elements of the posture, drapery formulation, and hair depiction relate quite closely with the King Aśoka type Buddha as known in the Ch'eng-tu (Szechwan) copies of the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century. This style is likely to be different from the so-called King Udayana style image, which may have a different linear scheme for the drapery. To the Chinese of this early period, the King Aśoka Buddha is distinguished by symmetrical U-shaped folds that are not broken into localized linear groups. This is different from the King Udayana type image with the clear patterns of linear groups emphasizing various local parts of the body, as known from copies.<sup>51</sup> From the records of the South, it is clear that the King Aśoka Buddha was a popular form there; it does not appear to have been so popular in the North.

A possible relation of the Niche No.1 Buddha with the Buddhist art of the Eastern Chin in South China is supported by some stylistic factors, such as the flared ends of the robes, which appear to relate to the style of the robe of the standing figures in the Kyoto National Museum bronze mirror from South China. This becomes a major issue in determining the development of the "Chinese style" drapery for the Buddha image. The Niche No.1 Buddha has to be considered a major player in this issue, as it is a clear early prototype. Since we do not see the development of this flared style of drapery in the images of Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu or elsewhere in Kansu in the Sixteen Kingdoms period, it may be correct to think that it is a South China style being reflected in the Niche No.1 Buddha. However, there is a hiatus which we must be aware of: the art from Ch'ang-an, which would have been a major producer of Buddhist imagery during the Former and Later Ch'in periods. Ch'ang-an would also have possibly been a major source of Buddhist art influencing other areas in China, particularly that of eastern and southern Kansu. Though it is possible to think that the flared drapery could have been emerging from the artistic schools of Ch'ang-an and influenced the Niche No.1 style, there is no evidence at present to substantiate this, while there is some evidence, albeit slight, to suggest that it is an evolving idiom in the Eastern Chin in South China. It should also be noted that the incipient form of the flared hems appears in Kizil Cave 38. The art of Kizil is an influential factor in the Buddhist art of both North (including Kansu) and South China of this time, but it may be in the South where this motif was the most influential in formulating an artistic style for the Buddha image that was compatible with Chinese taste.

### D. *Relation with the Bāmiyān East Great Buddha*

There is another significant role that this special Buddha plays with respect to the larger field of Buddhist art history; it becomes important in relation to other colossal images of Central Asia and the greater Gandhāran region. In particular, it provides some evidence for supporting a dating of the East Great Buddha at Bāmiyān (Fig. 3.15) to the period of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (possibly to the earlier half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>51</sup> Such as images that appear like the Seiryōji Buddha, possibly a copy of the King Udayana type Buddha said to have belonged to Kumārajīva. See the study of this statue and the Udayana Buddha images presented in Volume II. Rhie (2002), pp. 432-445.

The East Great Buddha was studied in Volume I<sup>52</sup> and dated by comparative analysis which in the final conclusion showed its closest relation with works from Swat, eastern Central Asia, China and North Korea of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> In this analysis the Niche No.1 Buddha was briefly discussed.<sup>54</sup> Here certain points can be emphasized in more detail concerning the technical and stylistic similarities between these Buddhas which tend to suggest that they were part of the same general period. Between these two images, one colossal and one semi-colossal, there are four major points of close relation.

First with regard to technique, both use the method of stone core covered with clay and then stucco. This technique is virtually certain to have come to China from outside, and a likely source is the Bāmiyān East Great Buddha, since this technique does not appear to have been used elsewhere in any surviving images of greater Gandhāra (including other sculptures except the largest Buddhas at Bāmiyān), Western or Eastern Central Asia on either the Northern or Southern Silk Road sites.

With respect to stylistic elements, most significant is the similar shape of the body in each. The especially distinguishing factor in both images is the straight upper torso with little muscular demarcation and short-waisted proportions. Also, the positioning and shaping of the legs with emphasis on the somewhat natural contours of the knees is another pertinent factor of each. Though the East Great Buddha has a slight bend in the right leg and the Niche No.1 Buddha does not, the East Great Buddha appears essentially straight legged with feet placed apart approximately like those of the Niche No.1 Buddha. The somewhat unnatural juncture of the legs with the upper torso appears in both. Neither seem to have much sense of weight in the body.

Both also have the gauze-like drapery that appears so delicate and light as to have almost no weight. The drapery fold schemes do not match (the Bāmiyān Buddha utilizes the asymmetrical scheme and has more vertical direction to the lines on the arms and legs), but the quality of the drapery is very similar and not readily found in other examples. The delicate raised pleats over the chest areas of both are related to the Gandhāran fold technique of which the Niche No.1 Buddha is also has some relation, as noted above.

The shape of the heads seems to be very similar in both. Although much of the East Great Buddha's face is missing, it is clear the face was a long, rectangular shape with softly rounded jowls like those of the Niche No. 1 Buddha. The East Great Buddha has three lines on the neck (Fig. 3.15) and the Niche No. 1 Buddha is reported by Chang Pao-hsi to have three lines on the neck. It is not common to see the three lines at this time, but they do occur in images from Palmyra, Syria (dated to before 256 A.D.), in the Swat stone Buddha in Fig. 3.26, the cross-ankled Maitreya of Kizil Cave 38 in Figs. 3.20a, b, and the Tumshuk-Tagh standing wooden Buddha in Fig. 3.18, all dating around the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century as detailed above.

Finally, one other point which may appear minor, but which is another confirming factor in dating the East Great Buddha to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is the commonality of the patterning of the hem fold motif in the Buddha's under robe that can be seen under the raised right arm (Fig. 3.15) with the patterning of the hem of the cloth part of the headdress of the standing Bodhisattva of Group 17 from the back wall of Cave 169 (Figs. 4.26a, b). This particular clustering of folds is a beautiful decorative touch in

<sup>52</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 228-234.

<sup>53</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 236.

<sup>54</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 232.

the Bāmiyān Buddha style and it is very similar to the representation in this Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Bodhisattva, which is dated below to ca. 385-400.<sup>55</sup>

In conclusion, the Ping-ling ssu Niche No.1 Buddha, which in the study presented above was dated to approximately 475-485 independent of the East Great Buddha, has an apparent relation to the style of the East Great Buddha of Bāmiyān that may be used<sup>56</sup> to help establish the East Great Buddha as a 4th century image, more than likely around the mid- 4th century. With this dating for the East Great Buddha it is then very likely that the wave of colossal Buddhas at Kizil (Cave 47 and 77 of ca. 2nd half of the 4th century), the Northern Liang colossal Buddha (which will be studied in Volume IV of this series) and the Yün-kang colossal stone images in northeastern China of the 460s, is part of one contemporary movement of colossal cave niche, cave temple images, or colossal image shrines at monasteries of which the East Great Buddha at Bāmiyān is most likely one of the earliest and is the most dramatically large. A movement of colossal images in some of the monasteries of the Peshawar, Taxila and Swat areas of Gandhāra has recently been documented and studied by Kurt Behrendt, who dates the movement of colossal image shrines in Gandhāra to around the first half of the 5th century, though this was preceded by about two centuries of “monumental” image shrines, that is, images greater than life-size.<sup>57</sup> If the Bāmiyān Buddha is not the progenitor of the colossal image in this part of Asia, then certainly it is at least a major inspiration and perhaps the ultimate expression of the idea at that time. It, of course, is even superseded by the 175 foot Buddha at Bāmiyān, which, according to the technical reason cited by Higuchi, was probably made after the East Great Buddha.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> In Chapter 4, section III. A.

<sup>56</sup> As it was in Rhie (1999), pp. 232-233.

<sup>57</sup> K. Behrendt, *The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*, Leiden, 2004, pp.173-210. His Phase III (a dating parameter used in his book to cover the period ca. 200-ca. 400 A.D.) had monumental image shrines, such as seen at Takht-i-Bāhi (See Chapter 8 below). His Phase IV (ca. 5th-8th century) had colossal image shrines in the period of wealthy patronage, ca. 400-450, such as the ones at Ranighat, Abba Sahib China in Swat and at the Dharmarājikā complex in Taxila.

<sup>58</sup> See my recent article on the 175-foot Buddha at Bāmiyān: “Aspects of the Two Colossal Buddhas at Bāmiyān,” *Xuanzang and the Silk Route*, ed. by Lokesh Chandra and Radha Banerjee, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 1-29. In this article I have presented reasons for dating the West Great Buddha to ca. late 5th-early 6th century.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### PING-LING SSU CAVE 169: WEST (REAR) WALL

#### I. INTRODUCTION TO CAVE 169

Cave 169 is located at the northernmost end of the caves and niches of the Lower Temple area of Ping-ling ssu. It is high on the cliff at the south side (facing, left) of the colossal seated Buddha (Figs. 3.4 and 4.1a). Part of the front of the cave and the cliff face below the cave have fallen off, making a deep crevice. Wooden plank stairs have been made to provide access to the cave nowadays. This “cave temple” is quite unusual. It is a natural cavern of irregular rectangular shape and uneven sloping walls (Fig. 4.1b). It measures 26.75 meters [87.76 ft.] wide, 19 meters [62.33 ft.] deep and 15 meters [49.21 ft.] high. Scattered over the rough walls of the cave are the remains of various Buddhist sculptures and wall paintings. A total of 24 groups of sculptures and paintings have been identified by the Chinese. The strange effects generated by the irregularity of the configurations and the usage of artificial panels and niches could certainly impart the impression of images “coming and going” from the rocks as described in the early literature quoted in the introduction to Ping-ling ssu in Chapter 3.

Originally, much of the whole cave appears to have been covered with images and paintings, judging from the remains of numerous holes for wooden supports to hold the clay surfaces and images. Attempts were made to smooth out the walls by adding clay to fill gaps and to make artificial wall surfaces and niches. In this matter, this cave seems to be quite a unique example. It is a different configuration from the structured central pillar type cave seen in some early central Kansu examples, the single niche early caves at Tun-huang, or the large niche style in the early caves at Mai-chi shan, all of which will be discussed later. Each of these sites has its own distinct character and different conceptual and artistic style.

Most of the sculptures and paintings inside the Cave 169 cavern appear to belong to the Western Ch'in period (385-431), but there are a few from the Northern Wei and there are the remains of a few wall paintings from Sui and T'ang (on the ceiling). Most sculptures are made of clay using a straw bundle core. Some, however, are a thin layer of clay over a high relief carved stone core. Of the latter type, most have lost the clay covering and have only the stone core relief carving remaining. In general, the east (entrance) wall, the west (rear) wall and the south (left) wall contain most of the images that appear stylistically to be earlier than most (but not all) of the paintings and sculptures of the north (right) wall, which contains the now famous niche with the Chien-hung 建弘 inscription.<sup>1</sup> There are variant styles among the paintings and sculpture, and the sequence of make is difficult to discern. At present there appears to be general consensus among Chinese scholars that the cave is Western Ch'in, primarily because of the Chien-hung inscription, which is usually cited as the date for most of the individual images. Teng Yü-hsiang of the Lan chow Archaeological Institute has studied this cave for many years and has presented the most detailed description and discussion of Cave 169 in his 1994

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<sup>1</sup> This inscription, which will be studied below in Chapter 7, dates to either 424 or 420 A.D., depending on the reading.

monograph of the cave.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, despite his excellent work, a more rigorously detailed chronology and investigation of stylistic sources as well as more attention to the iconographic identifications remains to be considered. These issues will be addressed and studied in this volume. In the history of Chinese Buddhist art the sculptures and paintings of Cave 169 have a special and important place. They are works of high quality which can, because of their quantity, excellent style, and inscriptional materials, provide important data for understanding this difficult period and for unlocking the problems of other late 4<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> century Chinese Buddhist art.

Cave 169 presents a different set of problems from the independent images studied so far in Volumes I and II. It comprises a large group of sculptures and paintings at one location and in one cave, nowadays only partially complete. The sculptures are painted clay, not bronze, and there is a variety of techniques involved. Further, there are some wall paintings and quite a few inscriptions and the iconography involves complex groupings and sets of images. Yet, as will become apparent, the independent images become an important ingredient in solving the chronological problems of the images in this cave, as is the art of Central Asia, particularly that from the Northern Route. Here the internal relationships as well as the external ones will be carefully considered. Each image group will be studied individually as well as in relation to other works in the cave, and to pertinent works from other sources and regions. In this way an understanding of the cave and its chronological sequence emerges. At the same time, factors pertinent to iconographic identities will be addressed. The prime purposes of this study is to determine, as much as possible, the chronology of the images, the probable identity of the groups of images, the probable sources from and links with art from other regions, and to understand the thrust of the Buddhist content of the images, their relation to the historical circumstances and to the development of the particular Chinese interpretation of Buddhist art in this early period.

Cave 169 will be studied according to the layout of each wall, starting from the rear (west) wall and proceeding to the front (east) wall, left (south) wall and finally to the right (north) wall. The numbering system already established by the Chinese will be used. It is a system which was assigned early in the investigation of this cave and later admitted by Teng Yü-hsiang and others to be quite arbitrary and not the most satisfactory. Nevertheless, this system has been maintained in Chinese studies for the sake of continuity. Though I use this Chinese numbering system to identify the images, in a few instances in my presentation here, I will deviate from presenting them in numerically sequential order, when it is more helpful for the chronological discussion to do so.

## II. WEST WALL (UPPER PART)

The west wall, which is the rear and main wall of the cave, is quite broad and irregular (Figs. 4.2 and 4.3). The southern part (facing, left side) is now rough stone and largely vacant of sculpted images, though there are some Sui or early T'ang remains of paintings, mostly apsaras, on the upper part

<sup>2</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang (editor-in-chief), *Ping-ling ssu i-liu-chiu k'u*, Shen-ch'ou, 1994. Here he concludes with a general chronological sequence in three phases: the initial period from ca. 385-419, comprising the earliest works: Group 18 and the under-painting of Group 10; the middle period (ca. 420-427), the period of development when Western Ch'in was prosperous, contains Groups 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 (outer layer), 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 24, and others; the final period (ca. 428-431) is one of decline for the Western Ch'in and fewer images were made in Cave 169: Groups 3, 15 and 19 are cited as the important ones. Groups 5 and 8 are considered N. Wei, probably before ca. 499-503 period. Some wall paintings were added to the ceiling during the Sui and T'ang, but after early T'ang there was no further work done in Cave 169. He also discusses the special and complicated situation of Groups 16 and 23, as will be detailed more below. See pp. 20-21.

of the walls. Images (sculptures and a few small remains of wall paintings) appear on the relatively flatter, northern (right) side, and these now constitute the major remains from the west wall. A large triangular projection of the wall more or less divides the northern and southern halves on the lower part of the wall (Fig. 4.3). It has some remains of wall paintings. On the northern half of the west wall there is an upper and a lower part, though originally, judging from the remaining holes in the wall, they were probably meant to be a unified grouping (Fig. 4.3). On the upper half there are relief sculptures of a large standing Buddha surrounded by smaller seated Buddhas and several very small Buddhas. There are also a few fragments of wall paintings. On the lower half are the sculptural remains of a large main triad (probably originally consisting of a standing Buddha with two standing Bodhisattvas), some smaller images of a Contemplative Bodhisattva, a group of five small seated Buddhas and two standing Buddhas. The images of this wall have been numbered by the Chinese as Groups Nos. 15-19 (Fig. 4.2). We will use these numbers to designate the groups, but will discuss these groups in the following order:

- 1) Group 18: a large standing Buddha with a number of smaller Buddhas, and a few wall painting fragments;
- 2) Group 17: a standing right attendant Bodhisattva, the remains of the lower portion of a standing Buddha (probably), indication of a standing left attendant Bodhisattva (probably);
- 3) Group 16: one seated Contemplative Bodhisattva, a row of five small dhyānāsana Buddhas and two standing Buddhas.

Groups 15 and 19, both artificially constructed panel walls with paintings of the thousand Buddhas, will be discussed below at the end of Chapter 6, following the presentation of the North Wall materials.

#### A. Group 18: Description, Dating and Stylistic Sources

At the upper portion and roughly in the center of the usable surface of this wall is a large standing Buddha (H. 4 m; 13.12 ft.) flanked on both sides by a total of ten dhyānāsana Buddhas of irregular size and positioning. Five of these seated Buddhas are relatively large and five are smaller. Together they form a group of six on the standing Buddha's right and a group of four on his left (Figs. 4.4 and 4.5). These images are all carved in high relief from the living rock, and each has a surrounding concave mandorla. For clarity in further discussion, I have numbered these ten dhyānāsana Buddhas according to the diagram in Fig. 4.6, which reflects the numbering from the study presented in section B below on the iconography. In addition, there are two much smaller stone relief images, labeled a) and b) in Fig. 4.6: a standing Buddha (near the juncture with the ceiling at the far southern side of Group 18), and a tiny dhyānāsana Buddha with mandorla-niche with rounded top between the two southernmost large seated Buddhas (Figs. 4.6 and 4.23). The measurements of all of these images is as follows (the image height is approximate):<sup>3</sup>

Large standing Buddha:	H. of image 4 m; H. of mandorla 4.70 m; W. of mandorla 2.50 m
dhyānāsana Buddha	1): 150 cm; 195 cm; 120 cm
“ “	2): 122 cm; 130 cm; 100 cm
“ “	3): 110 cm; 135 cm; 96 cm
“ “	4): 105 cm; 135 cm; 95 cm
“ “	5): 60 cm; 73 cm; 55 cm

<sup>3</sup> These measurements are from Wei Wen-pin, "Ping-ling ssu 169 k'u nei yang tsung lu," in Teng (1994), pp. 13-14.

“ “	6):	87 cm; 110 cm; 65 cm
“ “	7):	65 cm; 70 cm; 46 cm
“ “	8):	50 cm; 60 cm; 55 cm
“ “	9):	120 cm; 140 cm; 105 cm
“ “	10):	50 cm; 60 cm; 45 cm
small standing Buddha	a):	78 cm; 88 cm; 23 cm
small dhyānāsana Buddha	b):	20 cm; 40 cm; 20 cm

It is probable that the large standing central Buddha and the smaller seated Buddhas (nos. 1-10) immediately surrounding the large standing Buddha constitute one iconographic unit of a Buddha with the ten-direction Buddhas. The small standing Buddha a) and small dhyānāsana Buddha b) appear to be either extraneous or inserted randomly into the main grouping of the large standing Buddha and ten dhyānāsana Buddhas, which seem to present a cohesive iconographic unit. The iconographic issues will be addressed following the study of the images and their dating.

The wall surface around the Group 18 images was originally covered by wall paintings, possibly of many small Buddhas. Patches of prepared clay wall surfacing and several areas of painted surfaces still remain. A few painted dhyānāsana Buddhas with mandorlas can be seen here and there near the bottom of the large standing Buddha's mandorla and on the overhanging rock underneath seated Buddhas nos. 5 and 6. The colors are brick red, creamy white and malachite green.<sup>4</sup> They appear similar to depictions of the thousand Buddhas, but it is not certain that they were specifically a thousand Buddha configuration.

All of the sculptures in Group 18 exist as stone relief carvings that originally served as a core form for applying a molded covering of clay mixture which was then painted in polychrome color. This covering is mostly lost on all the seated figures, but on the main standing Buddha a few areas still remain in the lower part of the inner and outer robes and part of the mandorla (Fig. 4.9). The stone core technique was used for only a few images in this cave: for Group 18 on the upper west wall, for the Group 16 five small dhyānāsana Buddhas on the west wall, and for Groups 1 and 4 on the upper part of the north wall. As discussed with the Niche No.1 Buddha above, which is also stone core, this technique is of particular interest. It is not a common technique among clay sculptures; most clay and stucco sculptures of India, Western and Eastern Central Asia, and China do not use this technique. The images of Kizil (in Kucha), even the colossal ones, were all wooden dowel and straw bundle technique as the core for the overlay of clay. In the case of Yün-kang and later cave temple sculptures in China, images were usually completely finished in stone. The stone core technique was used only for a limited time at Ping-ling ssu, and it is considered to be an early feature.<sup>5</sup> It is fortunate that these images were made with stone core, which at least provides the basic shape of the images which survive today. Otherwise, these likely would all have been lost over time.

<sup>4</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 14. For photos, see *Chūgoku sekkutsu, Heirinji sekkutsu*, 1986, Figs. 6 and 7.

<sup>5</sup> Wei Wen-pin uses the terms carved stone (石雕) and stone core (石胎) when giving the data for the Group 18 figures. Buddhas a), b) 2, 3, 4 and 9 were all cited as “stone carved”; Buddhas 1, 8, 7, 6, 5, 10 and the large standing Buddha were all cited as “stone core”. He does not explain further. I do not see any perceptible difference in technique, though perhaps the carved stone ones did not have any clay-stucco outer layer. Wei Wen-pin (1994), pp. 13-14.

### 1. Group 18: Large Standing Central Buddha

This large standing Buddha in Fig. 4.7 (H. about 4 m; 13.12 ft.) is significantly different from the Niche No.1 Buddha (Figs. 3.9-3.12) discussed in Chapter 3 above, though there are some similarities, most notably the similar usage of the stone core technique. However, it will become clear in the ensuing discussion that the differences reveal major changes in the stylistic components of the Group 18 large standing Buddha.

#### a. Proportions and Posture, Body Form and Head

The Group 18 large standing Buddha (Figs. 4.7-4.9) has relatively slender and elegant proportions compared with the more massive and stiffly vertical, yet rounded, shaping of the Niche No.1 Buddha (Fig. 3.9). The stance is wider and more open than that of the Niche No.1 Buddha and the arms drawn more outward to the sides. The feet are placed near the edge of the large lotus pod. This wider stance is a feature of other standing Buddhas in Cave 169, most of which are even more vigorous than the Group 18 Buddha (Figs. 5.45, 7.16c). The Group 18 Buddha's torso is slightly longer with more curvature than the straight contours of the Niche No. 1 Buddha, and there is less sense of rounded volume in the torso and limbs.<sup>6</sup>

The head is long, but not as large and broad in proportion to the body as the Niche No. 1 Buddha. The features appear to have been quite large and the mouth in particular seems to have softer modeling, but this could have had a different effect when covered by the clay (perhaps similar to the face of the standing Bodhisattva in Group 17 in Figs. 4.26a, 4.27). The hair on the cranium is not as flat to the skull shape compared with the Niche No. 1 Buddha, but rather has a more puffy appearance. The face, hairline and shape of the cranium are all remarkably similar to those of the Ching-ch'uan Buddha of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.16). The *uṣṇīṣa* of the Group 18 standing Buddha appears prominent and ball shaped and the neck is long and has a pronounced trapezoid shape, both different from the Niche No. 1 Buddha.

The arm and hand positions are completely different from those of the Niche No.1 Buddha and the standing Kyoto National Museum Buddha (Fig. 3.13), the latter discussed as dating to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Though somewhat broken, it can still be seen that the arms of the Group 18 Buddha are especially long and the left arm is bent up at an acute angle with the left hand apparently holding the clumped hem of the *saṅghāṭī* high against the left side of his chest (Figs. 4.7, 4.8). The gesture of the left hand has three fingers folded under and the index finger extended upwards. The right arm hangs down and seems to have originally held the hem of the outer robe. This arm and hand posture is seen in a number of the other standing Buddhas in Cave 169: the Buddha of Group 22 (Fig. 5.45), one of the Buddhas of Group 16 (Fig. 4.48), two of the Group 9 Buddhas (Fig. 7.22), and the standing two Buddhas in Group 4 (Fig. 6.6), the latter on the upper part of the North Wall and also with stone core. Seven of the eleven remaining standing Buddhas of the early period (that is, prior to ca. 450) in Cave 169 have this posture, so it is definitely a posture of some currency under the Western Ch'in. An independent bronze standing Buddha in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City has a closely similar posture (Fig. 4.10), as does the colossal Cave 18 Buddha at Yün-kang of ca. late 460's (Fig. 8.53b, c). The Nelson-Atkins Museum bronze Buddha (of unknown provenance) is inscribed as Maitreya and

<sup>6</sup> The holes in the right thigh area suggest that there may have been some restoration of this area.

<sup>7</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 261-265.

tentatively dated in Volume II to Phase III (ca. 400-439; and more specifically to “earlier than 430”).<sup>8</sup> Because of the example of the Nelson-Atkins Museum Buddha, it is possible to think that the Group 18 Buddha is Maitreya, but we cannot rule out the possibility that this positioning was also used for other Buddhas as well, since two of the three Buddhas in Groups 4 and 9 of Cave 169 (Figs. 6.6 and 7.22), likely to be a configuration of the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present, and Future), both have this position.

The origins of this combination of gestures for the Buddha image appears to be Haḍḍa and Gandhāra. For example, several among the seven standing Buddhas in the stone relief platform dating ca. 250-350 A.D. from Takht-i-Bāhi<sup>9</sup> have a similar gesture (the third and sixth Buddha from the left in Fig. 3.14b), though the left hand in these two figures is not held so directly on the front of the chest as is the case with the Group 18 Buddha. The right hand of each of these same two Buddhas in the Takht-i-Bāhi relief is hidden under the robe and does not hold an edge of the robe as does the Nelson-Atkins Gallery Buddha in Fig. 4.10. It is certainly clear that the Group 18 large standing Buddha is not in a teaching gesture or in a gesture indicating “have no fear” (the *abhaya mudrā*). It may be a gesture without specific meaning or message, but certainly it is used pervasively in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and also occurs with frequency in the sculptures of Gandhāra and Haḍḍa, particularly among the stucco imagery of the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries (see below, Figs. 8.30c, 8.32e, 8.35a, 8.39c).

Stylistically speaking, the factor of the especially long, slender arms and the particular shaping and posture of the left arm held high up against the body relates to the Buddha figures in the wall paintings of Cave 84 at Kizil (Fig. 4.11). These were studied in Volume II and dated there among the earliest caves at Kizil, to ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup>

#### b. *Drapery*

With regard to the drapery, we encounter in the Group 18 large standing Buddha a different form than seen in the earliest surviving Chinese Buddha images (2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> century), all of which wear the *saṅghātī* with both shoulders covered. The robes of the Group 18 standing Buddha are worn according to what is often called the “right-shoulder bare” mode. We will have occasion in this study to encounter not only the strict form of the bare right shoulder (that is, with the upper and under robes passing under the right arm), but also some variations which are forms of a kind of “sling mode” of arranging the cloth of the *saṅghātī* (outer robe) around the right arm.<sup>11</sup> The strict one-shoulder bare mode as well as the sling type variant are well-known in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan, particularly in the stucco imagery, for example, as seen in Fig. 4.12. For ease in referring to the various modes seen in the art of Gandhāra, Afghanistan and China in the 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, Fig. 4.15 shows some of the commonly seen variants. The variations probably evolved to a certain extent in Central Asia, such as seen in the wall paintings of Kizil in Caves 77 and 212 of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 4.13 and 4.14), and perhaps even in China, where the variants of the sling method were popular in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. These variants depend on how much of the right arm and chest is covered or exposed. The classification used here is as follows (see Fig. 4.15a-e):

<sup>8</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 477-480, where it is noted that it has many similarities with the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 standing Buddhas.

<sup>9</sup> This relief is discussed in detail in Chapter 8 below.

<sup>10</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 652-653, 719.

<sup>11</sup> This particular mode of wearing the outer robe, which I am calling here the “sling mode”, derives from the “himation” of Greek and Roman origins, as frequently pointed out by Sir John Marshall. J. Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, Cambridge, 1960 (New Delhi reprint, 2000), pp. 18, 33, 34, 38, 39, 48, 61, 83.



- 1) *full sling* covers all of the right arm and half of the right chest only leaving the right hand exposed, usually in the abhaya mudrā, or in the dhyāna mudrā. In the latter case, the edges of the saṅghāṭī are pulled sharply downward by the hands in the lap, resulting in a long, symmetrical V-shaped appearance to the saṅghāṭī opening over the front of the chest (Fig. 4.15a);
- 2) *half sling* exposes half of the arm, shows the chest and usually has a tense, sweeping hemline over the right shoulder and arm and across the chest to the left shoulder (Fig. 4.15b).
- 3) *open sling* mode reveals most of the arm and chest (Figs. 4.15c, d, e). It has some variations:
  - a) *open sling with rim*: shows the entire right arm and chest, but also shows the hem of the outer robe as a rim around the back (outer) edge of the right arm (Fig. 4.15c), thus seeming to frame the outer contours of the right arm;
  - b) *open sling with shoulder cap*: has a kind of cap or lap over the right shoulder—usually used when the right arm is positioned outward away from the body (Fig. 4.15d);
  - c) *open sling with rim and shoulder cap*: has a loop of the robe over the right shoulder and also the hem acts as a contour around the remainder of the right arm—usually seen when the right arm is held inward, especially in the abhaya or dhyāna mudrā (Fig. 4.15e).
- 4) examples in Fig. 4.15f-i show variants for the dhyāna mudrā position.

According to this classification, the Group 18 Buddha wears the outer robe (saṅghāṭī) in the form of the open sling with part of the robe like a cap over the right shoulder (Fig. 4.15d). This difference in manner of wearing the saṅghāṭī is a prime element in what can be seen as a major shift and/or style variant compared with the style of the Niche No.1 Buddha type in Fig. 3.9 and earlier small bronze Buddha images, all of which have both shoulders covered. This manner of wearing the outer robe as an open sling with shoulder cap results in exposing the upper edge of the inner garment on the chest, which is worn under the right armpit. In the Group 18 standing Buddha each garment has a flat hem band that emphasizes the gentle curvature of the chest. Interestingly, I do not see examples of this particular form in the imagery of Gandhāra or Afghanistan of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century period, but it does occur in the paintings of Kizil (Figs. 4.13, 4.14). It may be a derivative of the Gandhāra/Afghanistan modes as more freely interpreted in Central Asia, particularly in the region of Kucha on the Northern Silk Road.

The end of the saṅghāṭī over the left shoulder in the Group 18 large standing Buddha is revealed as a widening, curved, vertical drape that extends to about the elbow level (partially broken at the end). The drapery hems falling from the raised left arm form a gradual outward arc (Fig. 4.8). The edges are parallel, relatively close, and lack the wide, tunnel effect seen in the Rawak Style I Buddhas (Fig. 3.16) and others, including, it seems, the Niche No.1 Buddha (Fig. 3.9). It is closer to the style of the two hems coming nearer to each other that appears in the Buddha from Butkara I in Swat datable by some evidences to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.16),<sup>12</sup> and very similar to the hems falling from the arms of the standing wooden Buddha from Tumshuk-Tagh in Fig. 4.17, dated in Vol. II to around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup>

Part of the original clay molded surface of the drapery robes with their painted designs survives on the lower portion of the statue where the hem of the under robe hangs below the outer robe (saṅghāṭī). The under robe is a neutral color and has thin incised lines that form closely spaced fold lines in a

<sup>12</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 297, note 93.

<sup>13</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 538-539.



parallel U design over the legs, nearly vertical lines between the legs, and curved vertical lines at the sides (Figs. 4.7 and 4.9). A rather wide, flat hem band borders the under robe, which makes a loop at the sides. This looping of the hem could be a simplified version of the looped hems occurring in Gandhāran standing Bodhisattva images. A similar looped pattern occurs in the fragment of a lower torso from Tumshuk Toqquz-Sarai, of ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.18).

The particular delicacy of the thin incised lines is a style related to the thin incised line technique and style appearing in the bronze Nitta abhayā mudrā Buddha in Fig. 4.19, independently dated to ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Volume II.<sup>14</sup> The generally simple scheme of the drapery in the Group 18 large standing Buddha with its smooth, simply rounded edges and large surfaces made interesting with a filling of delicate lines is somewhat akin to the style of this Nitta bronze.

The lower part of the Group 18 standing Buddha has remains of green, orange and dark blue color of a patched robe design. The main color seems to be malachite green, which is also the color of the border. Remnants of the green still adhere here and there to other areas, especially in the creases of the drapery falling from the left arm and between the legs.

So far, the elements most comparable to the Group 18 standing Buddha appear to be from the early images at the Tumshuk sites of first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, some wooden Buddhas from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century from both Tumshuk and Kizil, Kizil Cave 84 of ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century, and some of the bronze Buddhas from China, especially from Shansi (Nitta abhayā mudrā Buddha) and Kansu (Ching-ch'uan Buddha altar) areas, around the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. These comparisons would appear to relate to what we are noting here as major new elements in the Group 18 Buddha style when compared with the Niche No. 1 Buddha. These factors may account for a number of the differences between the Group 18 large standing Buddha and the Niche No.1 Buddha. While the Group 18 large standing Buddha appears to relate most compatibly with some early paintings and sculptures from sites of the Northern Silk Road, namely Tumshuk and Kizil, and bronze images from northern China (Shansi and Kansu), the closest comparisons for the Niche No.1 Buddha were from sites of the Southern Silk Road, namely, the Style I images at Rawak (Khotan) and the Buddha painting from Shan-shan, both of late 3<sup>rd</sup>–early 4<sup>th</sup> century, and to some images from South China. Both appear to have some overlap in relation with Kizil Cave 38 (ca. mid to 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century). These differences seem to be attributable more to differences of stylistic lineage (Northern Silk Road and North China versus Southern Silk Road and South China) rather than to a large time differential, though certainly both factors are involved.

### c. *Mandorla and Pedestal*

The mandorla for the Group 18 large standing Buddha is a rather large, somewhat oval, elongated unitary shape with total height 4.70 m and width 2.50 m (Figs. 4.4, 4.5, 4.7). It is concave, thus creating a niche-like setting for the Buddha image in high relief. The contours curve to a top which is now ambiguous due to the large crack at the top of this wall surface that was filled in with the clay surfacing originally made to smooth the wall surface (Fig. 4.4). The top of the mandorla could have been rounded or slightly pointed. The contours of the curve would seem to suggest moving towards a pointed shape.<sup>15</sup> However, among the seated Buddhas to both sides, the mandorlas appear mostly to have rounded tops, so that is likely to have been the case with the large standing Buddha as well.

<sup>14</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 322–325.

<sup>15</sup> Wei Wen-pin calls it a pointed arch niche: 尖拱形淺龕. Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 13.

The shape of this mandorla is not the same as that of the surviving ones known from the Hopei small bronze Buddha altars (Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9), nor of the Ching-ch'uan small bronze Buddha (Fig. 2.1a, b, and 2.16), all discussed earlier as Phase II images probably dating around last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Since these are seated images, and some have attendants, this could make some difference. Rounded top mandorlas are seen in some of the wall paintings from Kizil Cave 84 (Fig. 4.11), for some of the mandorlas of Kizil Cave 38 (Fig. 3.20a) and generally for those of Cave 77 (Fig. 4.20), as well for the wooden standing Buddha found in Kizil Cave 76 (Fig. 4.21). In the chronology of the early Kizil caves in Volume II these images were all dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In Kizil Cave 84 (early 4<sup>th</sup> century) the head halo is encompassed within the larger mandorla (Fig. 4.11). The mandorlas of Kizil Cave 38 (mid to third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century) show mixed types: in the major image of the seated cross-ankled Maitreya (Fig. 3.20a) the body and head halos retain their contours, but in the two contemplative images below they are subsumed within an encompassing mandorla contour with rounded top.<sup>16</sup> However, in one of the Jātaka scenes on the ceiling of Kizil Cave 38, the mandorla for a standing image is tall, slender and pointed (leaf-shape) (Fig. 4.22a). Kizil Cave 77 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century) has a complete encompassing halo with rounded top in the seated cross-ankled Maitreya painting (Fig. 4.20).<sup>17</sup> Cave 14 (last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century) in a Jātaka scene again with a standing figure, has a mandorla with a mildly pointed top (Fig. 4.22b).<sup>18</sup> This Cave 14 mandorla and the one seen in the standing wooden Buddha from Cave 76 in Fig. 4.21 (ca. mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>19</sup> are probably the closest examples to the mandorla shape of the Group 18 large standing Buddha.

Fragments of the painted surface of the mandorla still adhering to the stone show there was at least one ring of seated dhyānāsana Buddhas painted with red and white colors. It is difficult to determine if this painting is original or later, but it can be noted that the ring of dhyānāsana Buddhas is seen in other mandorlas of standing Buddhas in Cave 169 (Figs. 5.45, 7.16c).

The lotus pedestal is large with a wide circumference. The pod is quite low, but it is wide to accommodate the rather wide stance of the Buddha (wider than the Niche No.1 Buddha). The turned down petals are large and double-lobed.<sup>20</sup> Double-lobed lotus petals are prominently used in the lotus pedestal of the Asian Art Museum's bronze standing Bodhisattva dated in Volume II to ca. 400 (Fig. 2.12). Perhaps the early form of the double lobed lotus can be ascertained in the small wooden statues from Tumshuk (Fig. 3.18) and Kizil (Fig. 4.21).

#### d. *Conclusions*

Even though there is considerable difference between the Group 18 large standing Buddha and the Niche No.1 Buddha, there is some kinship with respect to the stone core technique, in the overall affinity in the delicacy of the linear style, and in the generally quiet demeanor. Compared with the other standing Buddhas in Cave 169 (Groups 22, 16, 7 and 9), there is less elaboration and movement in the hems of the drapery and generally less vigor of posture in the arms and shape of the body. Judging from both technique and style, it appears that the Group 18 large standing Buddha, and probably the accompanying dhyānāsana Buddhas, of the upper West Wall are among the earliest images in the cave,

<sup>16</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.50j.

<sup>17</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.56c.

<sup>18</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 691; figs. 4.66d and e.

<sup>19</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 697.

<sup>20</sup> There is a suggestion in Teng (1994), p.3 of the catalogue that the lotus pedestal may have been restored.

dating later than the Niche No.1 Buddha and before the other standing Buddha statues of this cave, as will become clear in the ongoing discussions.

Comparative study with sculptures and paintings from Central Asia indicate an approximate dating for the Group 18 large standing Buddha to be around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. However, the preponderance of comparisons points towards the earlier dating, thus, perhaps late 4<sup>th</sup> century and later than the date of the Niche No.1 Buddha, which was discussed in Chapter 3 as datable to ca. 375-385. Judging from the points noted in the above analysis, the most plausible date for the Group 18 large standing Buddha would appear to be ca. 385-400. Aside from some relation with certain bronze images of North China, such as the Ching-ch'uan altar Buddha from Kansu and Nitta abhayā mudrā bronze Buddha probably from Shansi (Figs. 2.1e, 4.19), most similarities occur with the wall paintings of Kizil (Caves 84, 38, 77 and 14) and some wooden sculptures from Kizil and Tumshuk of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century on the Northern Silk Road.

## 2. Group 18: Ten Dhyānāsana Buddhas

On both sides of the Group 18 large standing Buddha there are altogether ten relatively large dhyānāsana Buddhas (Figs. 4.2 -4.5 and Nos. 1-10 in Fig. 4.6). Together they make a prominent and obviously important group in this cave on the main (back) wall. It is fortunate that they were made of the carved stone core, or they would not likely have survived the centuries. These ten dhyānāsana Buddhas appear to represent the ten-direction Buddhas.<sup>21</sup> It is interesting that they are of varying sizes and are positioned irregularly rather than simply all the same size and lined up, which is typical for sets of Buddhas. They all appear to have the dhyāna mudrā with hands on edge, similar to the one clear example in the rather large seated Buddha above the standing Buddha's right shoulder (no. 2 in Fig. 4.6). There is some variation in the modes in the robe depiction. Some have both shoulders covered (nos. 9 and 8 in Fig. 4.6), others have the right shoulder bare (no. 7 in Fig. 4.6), and some have the open sling with shoulder cap mode (nos. 1, 2 in Fig. 4.6). All the images have a concave mandorla (with apparently rounded top rather than pointed top), which acts as a niche (Figs. 4.4 and 4.5), similar to the mandorla of the large standing Buddha. One of the seated Buddhas (no. 7) impinges on the standing Buddha's mandorla on his right side (Figs. 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6). The seated Buddhas do not appear to have a pedestal, but sit directly on the bottom of the mandorla-niche. This latter feature is characteristic of many of the images seen on the stupas at Taxila, Peshawar and Haḍḍa (Figs. 8.9a-c, 8.11b, 8.12a-c, 8.14a, 8.15, 8.16b and d, 8.23a, 8.26b and c, 8.30b, d and e, 8.32e, 8.37b and c, as well as on the independent bronze stupa in Fig. 8.11k).

Generally, these seated Buddhas are stylistically similar to the large standing Buddha of Group 18. All have a long face with rather soft features and an elegantly proportioned torso with gently curved upper chest and slender arms similar to the standing Buddha. In images with both shoulders covered, the cowl fold droops relatively low (Fig. 4.23 and no. 9 in Fig. 4.6). In images with the open sling mode with shoulder cap (Fig. 4.4 and nos. 1, 2 in Fig. 4.6), part of the under robe is shown and, like the outer robe, it has a narrow raised hem band. The hem bands fit to the curves of the upper chest creating a slight sense of gentle movement rather than a totally stiff edge.

<sup>21</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang describes Group 18 as a standing Buddha in the center within 12 shallow arched niches and does not address the specific iconography. Teng (1994), p. 9.

With some observation it appears that there are several possible ways of reading the scheme of the ten dhyānāsana Buddhas, which has five larger images and five smaller images, but they are divided into two groups of six and four on the large standing Buddha's right and left respectively (Figs. 4.5 and 4.6). As suggested, this configuration of small Buddhas around the large standing Buddha would appear to be a representation of the Buddhas of the ten-directions, but this suggestion needs to be investigated further.

### B. *Group 18: Iconography of the Large Standing Buddha with Ten Dhyānāsana Buddhas*

The configuration of the ten direction Buddhas is not seen among the remaining Buddhist images in China prior to Cave 169, including the other Kansu area caves, as far as I am aware. However, the ten-direction Buddhas appear commonly in early Mahāyāna texts translated into Chinese by the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century and into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. A group of ten Buddhas such as we see in Group 18, which would most likely be the ten direction Buddhas, is a clearly Mahāyāna configuration, since the Hīnayānists do not recognize the ten direction Buddhas. Depictions of what may be surmised to be the Buddhas of the ten directions appear in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly on the drum level of the domes of stupas, only a few of which still survive. Also, there are some representations of what seem to be the ten direction Buddhas in the wall paintings of Bāmiyān. These will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 8.

#### 1. *Group 18 Schema*

The Buddhas of the ten directions are the Buddhas of the four cardinal directions, the four intermediate directions, the Zenith and Nadir. Considering the arrangement of the Group 18 configuration more carefully, there appears to be significance both to the grouping (group of six and group of four) and to the sizes of the images (five large and five small), which makes a relatively complicated dual system. It is not clear, however, which is the primary and which is the secondary principle in unlocking the scheme and the specific identity (i.e., direction) of each Buddha. To pursue this problem further, we would like to reference the diagram drawn from the picture of the upper west wall and use a numbering system of 1-10 for the ten dhyānāsana Buddhas as seen in Fig. 4.6 (leaving aside for the moment the two small images a) and b) that are likely to be extraneous to the major group of ten).

There may be at least four ways to read this configuration with respect to possibly identifying each individual Buddha with the probable direction as follows:

scheme 1) read as two coherent but separate groups, one on each side of the large standing Buddha (Figs. 4.5 and 4.6). This would yield a configuration of a group of six (on the standing Buddha's right), which could be read as representing either the four cardinal or four intermediate directions, plus the Zenith and Nadir. The group of four (on the standing Buddha's left) could be either the four cardinal or four intermediate Buddhas. In this schema, the largest seated Buddhas in the group of six are likely to be the four cardinal directions (the primary and therefore most important directions). Two of the small Buddhas of the group of six might be the Zenith and Nadir. The group of four Buddhas on the standing Buddha's left would then be the four intermediate directions. This reading, however, has a flaw in respect to the size: there are really three small Buddhas in the group of six, rather than two. Or, the group of six Buddhas could be read as two groups of three images (three large and three small), but this essentially leads nowhere.

scheme 2) read according to the relative size of the seated Buddha images. This would yield a configuration of the five largest Buddhas along the upper level and the five smallest Buddhas along the lower level (albeit not a straight line in either case). In this instance, four of the large Buddhas would represent the four cardinal directions and the fifth one could be the Zenith. The Nadir would be grouped as the fifth of the five smallest sized images, the other four of which would represent the intermediate directions. The difficulty with this scheme is in determining which of the ten Buddhas are the Zenith and Nadir and in determining the direction of the reading (from right to left or left to right).

scheme 3) regardless of size and groups, read in clockwise (or counterclockwise) order as a kind of circle around the large standing Buddha. The problem would be where to start. For example: a) starting at the large standing Buddha's right with the Buddha inside his mandorla (only one to be inside) and ending with the seated Buddha nearest to the large standing Buddha's left side; or, b) starting perhaps with the largest of the seated Buddhas (no. 1 in Fig. 4.6). Here the question would be to determine a clockwise or counterclockwise direction of reading.

scheme 4) read in pairs of large and small Buddhas (large Buddha above, smaller Buddha below the larger one), yielding five pairs from any direction, probably as follows: large Buddha (a cardinal direction) with its nearest smaller Buddha (an intermediate direction) repeated four times with the final pair being the Zenith (probably larger Buddha) and Nadir (smaller Buddha). In this scheme it is most likely that the pair at the far left (facing) would be the Zenith and Nadir, since they are slightly removed around a bend in the wall (nos. 9 and 10 in Fig. 4.6). This would leave the four cardinal and intermediate groups to be on the main, flatter face of the wall and nearest to the standing Buddha. Also, the likelihood is that the reading is then from right to left (facing the wall), ending with the Zenith and Nadir at the far left side. And, the reading would probably be large Buddha, small Buddha, next large Buddha, etc., that is, in pairs of large and small Buddhas.

Any of these schemes are possible in the case of Group 18. Also, it is possible that there are other ways of reading, including a combination of some elements of each of the four arrangements presented above. Much depends on what is the primary and what is the secondary principle of ordering (size or position), but there may be other factors involved as well. In order to determine the greater likelihood of the scheme being used in Group 18, further factors need to be considered, such as the reading order and/or individual identity of the ten-direction Buddhas as given in the early sutras translated into Chinese.

## 2. *Buddhas of the Ten-Directions in Early Mahāyāna Sūtras*

The early Buddhist sutras translated into Chinese before ca. 425 A.D. which mention the ten-direction Buddhas (shih-fang fo 十方佛) or related terms such as shih-fang chu fo 十方諸佛 (various Buddhas of the ten-directions) or shih-fang shih chieh 十方世界 (ten-direction worlds) include the following, presented more or less in chronological order of their translation into Chinese.

The earliest known translations into Chinese of texts that mention the ten-direction Buddhas are Nos. 1) and 2) below:

### 1) *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*

a. (*Tao-hsing po-jo ching* 道行般若經) translated by Lokakṣema (Chih Lou-chia-ch'an 支婁迦讖)<sup>22</sup> and put out in 179 A.D. under the Later Han in Loyang.

<sup>22</sup> Chih Lou-chia-ch'an; also called Chih-ch'an 支讖, who was working in Loyang sometime after 165 in the Later Han



Example: "... able to see the ten-direction various Buddha-samādhi. At that time the ten-direction various Buddhas all praisingly saying ... 得見十方諸佛三昧。爾時十方諸佛皆讚歎言 ..." <sup>23</sup>

b. (*Ta-ming-tu ching* 大度經) translated by Chih-ch'ien 支謙 (ca. 223-253 A.D.)

Example: "... enter and see the ten-direction meditation. Various Buddhas all far away praisingly saying ... 入見十方定。諸佛皆遙歎言 ..." <sup>24</sup>

2) *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (*Po-chou san-mei ching* 般舟三昧經, Samādhi of the Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present) translated by Lokakṣema (Chih Lou-chia-ch'an 支婁迦讖), put out in Later Han, 179 A.D., 10th month, in Loyang. <sup>25</sup>

In chüan 2 (practice):

Example: "... The Buddha said to the bodhisattva Bhadrāpāla: 'Any bodhisattvas whose thoughts are at present concentrated and directed towards the Buddhas of the ten quarters, will, if they possess mental concentration, achieve all the exalted practices of a bodhisattva ...' " <sup>26</sup>

... 佛告毘陀和菩薩。若有菩薩所念現在。定意向十方佛。若有定意一切得菩薩高行 ... <sup>27</sup>

Example: "... The Buddha said: 'By virtue of these dharmas of conduct one brings about the meditation and then masters the Meditation in Which the Buddhas of the Present All Stand Before One. By what means does one bring about the Meditation in which the Buddhas of the Present All Stand Before One? In this way, Bhadrāpāla: if there are any monks or nuns, laymen or laywomen who keep the precepts in their entirety, they should settle down somewhere all alone and call to mind the presence of the Buddha Amitābha in the western quarter 心念西方阿彌陀佛; then, in accordance with what they have learned, they should reflect that a thousand million myriad Buddha-fields away from here, in his land called Sukhāvātī, in the midst of a host of bodhisattvas, he is preaching the sutras. Let them all constantly call to mind the Buddha Amitābha ...' " <sup>28</sup>

Example: "... [In the same way, Bhadrāpāla, bodhisattvas hear of the Buddha of the present in whatever quarter they are facing and] constantly reflect on that quarter, wishing to see the Buddha. When they reflect on the Buddha they ought not to reflect on [him as] an existing thing, nor should they have [the notion: 'It is something'] set up by me. As they would conceive of emptiness so should they reflect on the Buddha standing there, like a precious gem set on beryl. In this way bodhisattvas will have a clear vision of the innumerable Buddhas of the ten quarters ...' " <sup>29</sup>

... 常念所向方欲見佛。即念佛不當念有。亦無我所立。如想空當念佛立。如以珍寶琉璃上。菩薩如是見十方無央數佛清淨 ... <sup>30</sup>

This particular passage is very interesting for its literal description of the Buddha "standing there like a

<sup>23</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 8, (T 224), 472a.

<sup>24</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 8, (T 225), p. 504c.

<sup>25</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), pp. 902c-919c; Korean Catalogue (K 67). It was revised in 208 A.D. at Hsü-ch'ang 許昌, then the capital (near Loyang, which was in ruins at the time). Like the *Tao hsing Po-jo ching*, which came out on the same day in 179 A.D., it is securely attributed to Lokakṣema by Tao-an (312-385) in his catalogue *Tsung-li chung-ching mu-lu* 綜理衆經目錄, commonly known as the *Tao-an lu* 道安錄 or *An-lu* (ca. 375).

Tsukamoto (1985), pp. 106-107; P. Harrison, "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sutras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema," *Buddhist Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1993, p. 146.

<sup>26</sup> *The Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sutra*, translated by Lokakṣema and translated from the Chinese by Paul Harrison, Berkeley, 1998, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T. 418), p. 905b.

<sup>28</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 17; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), p. 905a.

<sup>29</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), p. 905b-c.



precious gem set on beryl ...” This description uses the character “li” 立 in the literal sense of standing, and not in the sense of “being established.” This is made clear by the next phrase that uses the character “shang” 上 (on or on top of) to emphasize “standing there like a precious gem set on top of beryl.” It would appear to pertain to any Buddha of any of the ten directions. However, the previous example cited above shows that Amitābha is selected out by name, and in this sutra, he is the only Buddha to be particularly named.

The main Buddha of Cave 169 Group 18 is a standing Buddha, and so could represent the meditation described in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*. In this case it could be any Buddha, but would be most likely to be Amitābha. Certainly the ten direction Buddhas are also a major component of the meditation presented in this sutra. It is further of interest to note that this sutra was a favorite text regarding meditation for the great monk Hui-yüan 慧遠 (died 416) on Lu shan in the South, whose influence was doubtless widespread and significant and whose precedence could lend strong support for the popularity of this text ca. 400 in China.<sup>31</sup>

### 3) *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra)

The two major early translations of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra) into Chinese are by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu 竺法護) in 286 A.D. (*Cheng fa-hua ching* 正法華經)<sup>32</sup> and Kumārajīva (Kumo-lo-chih 鳩摩羅什) in 406 A.D. (*Miao fa lien hua ching* 妙法蓮華經).<sup>33</sup> Mention of the ten direction Buddhas (shih-fang fo 十方佛) occurs often in this famous sutra, especially in Chapter 11, the chapter of the Appearance of the Treasure Stupa of To-pao (Prabhūtaratna Buddha). In that chapter the ten direction Buddhas—all forms of Śākyamuni—play a major role in the long and vivid narrative that unfolds prior to the opening of the stupa by Śākyamuni to reveal inside the perfect form of the Buddha Prabhūtaratna, a Buddha from the remote past. During the opening passages of the chapter where Śākyamuni is teaching on the Vulture Peak in Rājgir, he shows the ten-direction Buddhas to the fourfold assembly (bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakās and upāsikās, that is, monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen) after the sudden, miraculous appearance of the treasure stupa of Prabhūtaratna. Later Śākyamuni brings all the Buddhas of the ten-directions to assent to and witness his opening of the stupa.<sup>34</sup>

If the Cave 169 upper west wall configuration were following the scene of Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra), then the central large standing Buddha would be Śākyamuni and the ten-direction Buddhas are all transformation bodies of Śākyamuni. That is, they are all Śākyamuni in the four cardinal and four intermediate directions as well as the Zenith and Nadir (i.e., in all space). More than likely the 286 A.D. translation of Dharmarakṣa would be the basis text, rather than the translation made by Kumārajīva in 406, but either is possible. This will be considered further in next section (II.B.3.) below.

4) *Ta chih-tu lun* 大智度論 of Kumārajīva, translated in Ch’ang-an under the Later Ch’in in 402-405<sup>35</sup> There are many references to the ten-directions, ten-direction worlds, ten-direction Buddhas and ten-direction various Buddhas.

<sup>31</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 104-105.

<sup>32</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 475), pp. 63a-134b.

<sup>33</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), pp. 1c-62b.

<sup>34</sup> “We are told that Sakyamuni’s power first made it possible for His audience to see the countless throngs of the Buddhas of the Ten Quarters, in their domains in outer space, each preaching the law on a lion throne under a tree.” A. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, Ascona, 1959, p. 183.

<sup>35</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 25, (T 1509), pp. 57c-756c.

Example: "... See the ten-direction Buddhas. In the empty sky standing and praising is Jan-teng fo (Dipaṃkara). Jan-teng fo says, 'You, after one Asaṅkha Kālpa will become a Buddha called Shih-chia-mou-ni. Able to record thusly'" ... 見十方佛。於虛空中立讚然燈佛。然燈佛言。汝過一阿僧祇劫。當得作佛名釋迦牟尼。得記如是 ...<sup>36</sup>

Further, mention of the ten-direction Buddhas occurs in the section concerning the hypothetical question and answer about the "two bodies" of the Buddha: one body given by his parents 父母生身, and another body that is the Dharma-nature body 法性身 of the Buddha.<sup>37</sup>

"If Buddha's mysterious power is boundless, [reaching to] the 3,000 great 1,000 worlds and to the East direction various Buddha worlds as many as the sands of the Ganges river, and to the South, West, North directions, the four intermediate directions, the Zenith and Nadir, [his] bright image and powerful way of virtue is extremely high, then why, because of this, did he receive various sins as a result? The answer is, among those born of parents, Buddha received the human body power. A finger joint's power wins over 1,000, 10,000, 100 million *nayutas* of white elephant's power. Mysterious penetrating power is boundlessly unthinkable ... Again, Buddha has two kinds of body. One is the Dharma-nature body. The second one is the body born of Father and Mother. His Dharma-nature body fills the ten directions of empty space 十方虛空 without limit ... the Dharma-nature body Buddha is able to rescue the ten-direction worlds' sentient beings ...<sup>38</sup>

As with the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra), the ten-direction Buddhas of this text would be associated with Śākyamuni, but not specifically linked to his teaching on the Vulture Peak as they are in Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra). The *Ta chih-tu lun* is a much more theoretical construct, and less visual than the descriptions in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra). It does, however, underline the mystical Dharmakāya Body of Śākyamuni, which is also evident in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra), and which is revealed in elaborate and breath-taking form in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (Hua-yen ching) (see below).

5) The "Kuan" 觀 (Visualization) Sutras translated by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an under the Later Ch'in 後秦 (386-418)

i) *Ch'an pi yao fa ching* 禪祕要法經 (3 chüan, translated 402-412 A.D.)<sup>39</sup>

This text does not specifically mention the ten-direction Buddhas, but in visualizations other than of the ten-direction Buddhas, the order of presenting is according to East, South, West, North, four intermediate directions, Zenith and Nadir.<sup>40</sup>

ii) *Tso-ch'an san-mei ching* 坐禪三昧經 (2 chüan, translated 402-407)<sup>41</sup>

Examples: "... Then able to see one Buddha, two Buddhas, reaching to the ten-direction limitless world's various Buddha's form bodies ..." 便得見一佛二佛乃至十方無量世界諸佛色身... (p. 277a)

"... Able to see one Buddha makes the ten-direction Buddhas; able to see the ten-direction Buddhas makes one Buddha ..." 能見一佛作十方佛。能見十方佛作一佛 ... (p. 277a)

<sup>36</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 25, (T 1509), p. 91c.

<sup>37</sup> Soper sees this passage as: "a Dharmakaya, which fills the Ten Quarters of space, immeasurable and infinite... Sakya-muni possesses an immeasurable supernatural power that enables Him miraculously to create Buddhas in the Ten Quarters, so as to preach the Laws and emit light and convert all beings ..." Soper (1959), p. 199.

<sup>38</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 25, pp. 121c-122a.

<sup>39</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 613), pp. 242c-269c. Also see Korean Catalogue, K798.

<sup>40</sup> See examples in *Ibid.*, pp. 249c-250a.

<sup>41</sup> *Daizōkyō*, 15, (T 614), pp. 269c-286a. Also see Korean Catalogue, K991.

“... Then obtain the ten-directions, Buddhas of the three ages ...” 便得十方三世諸佛 ... (p. 281a)

iii) *Ch'an fa yao chieh* 禪法要解 (2 chüan, translated 402-405)<sup>42</sup>

Examples: “... Then hear the voices of the ten-direction various Buddhas ...” 乃聞十方諸佛音聲 ... (p. 296b)

“... the ten-direction various Buddhas think of this Bodhisattva and praisingly speak of his virtue ...” 十方諸佛念是菩薩讚歎其德 ... (p. 297b)

iv) *Ssu-wei lüeh yao fa* 思惟略要法 (1 chüan, translated 402-412)<sup>43</sup>

Examples: ten-direction various Buddhas 十方諸佛 (p. 299c); ten-direction separate body transformations 十方分身化 (p. 300b); ten-direction worlds 十方世界 (p. 300c)

In this text there is one section entitled the “Visualization Method of the Ten-Direction Buddhas” 十方諸佛觀法 and in it the visualization is specified in this order: East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest, North, Northeast, Zenith and Nadir. (p. 299c)

In the first text i) there is no reference to the ten-direction Buddhas, though the ten-directions are mentioned. In texts ii) and iii) the ten-direction Buddhas are referred to as a group without specific name or direction. However, in text iv), the *Ssu-wei lüeh yao fa*, the specific directions are noted, but the Buddhas are not named.

6) *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經, 10 chüan,<sup>44</sup> translated, according to the CSTCC and *Kao-seng chuan*, by Buddhahadra (d. 429), though the dates and locale of the translation are not given. The Korean Catalogue, K401, notes it was translated by Buddhahadra during the years of Yung-ch'ü 永初 (420-423) of the [Liu] Sung in Yang-chou. He may have translated it as early as 411 when he was at Lu-Shan with Hui-yüan, or, more probably at Chien-k'ang after leaving Lu-shan and where he translated the *Hua-yen ching* by 420.<sup>45</sup>

There are numerous references to the ten-direction Buddhas in this text, especially in the later chüans. In chüan 9 the ten-direction Buddhas are named along with their respective directions:

<sup>42</sup> *Daizōkyō*, 15, (T 616), pp. 286b-297a. Also see Korean Catalogue, K1004.

<sup>43</sup> *Daizōkyō*, 15, (T 617), pp. 297c-300c. Also see Korean Catalogue, K1010.

<sup>44</sup> *Daizōkyō*, 15, (T 643), pp. 645c-697a.

<sup>45</sup> A recent Ph.D. dissertation (1999) by Nobuyoshi Yamabe offers an in-depth and detailed study of the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*. Though he casts doubt on the attribution to Buddhahadra as the translator of the text into Chinese, he does show that this sutra is one of the earliest and most important of the “Kuan” sutras translated into Chinese in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. He notes that quotes from this sutra appear in early 6<sup>th</sup> century Chinese texts and that the text is especially important in relation to the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* (see Chapter 7 below for more discussion of this text in relation to wall paintings in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and its possible date in the 420's). Yamabe calls the sutra a “hybrid apocryphal sutra” with both Indian and Chinese elements and he presents the thesis that the text was probably composed in Turfan (based to a large degree on the known tendency for visualization practice in that area in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and as also seen in the art of Turfan, such as at the Toyuk caves). He sees definite links to Indian elements that would not have been known to the Chinese, but on the other hand he doubts a Gandhāran attribution of origin, mainly on the basis of the description of the famous Cave of the Buddha's [projection] Image near Nagarāhāra (Haḍḍa), Afghanistan. Regarding the latter point, in his opinion, the description in the text differs from the eye-witness accounts of Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang in particular, and therefore was probably not written in the Gandhāra area or the description would have been more accurate according to the actual site. However, the variations in the description of the Cave of the Buddha's [projection] Image are not necessarily definitive and can be understood in several different ways, including the factor that ponds can come and go in the desert at various times (for a study of this site, see Rhie (1999), pp. 115-127 and figs. 1.7a-c). The point that the language of the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* post-dates Kumārajīva's translations (from ca. 400-ca. 410) would not be a barrier to Buddhahadra being the translator, as his translation work took place shortly after that of Kumārajīva's in Ch'ang-an. Despite the many interesting

... with regard to the ten directions, subsequently, as you wish, you will become a Buddha 於十方面隨意作佛。In the East direction is Shan-te fo (Buddha), then [he] is my body 東方善德佛者則我身是。In the South direction is Chan-t'an-te fo (Buddha). 南方栴檀德佛。In the West direction is Wu-liang-ming fo (Buddha) 西方無量明佛。In the North direction is Hsiang-te fo (Buddha) 北方相德佛。In the Southeast direction is Wu-yu-te fo (Buddha) 東南方無憂德佛。In the Southwest direction is Pao-shih fo (Buddha) 西南方寶施佛。In the Northwest direction is Hua-te fo (Buddha) 西北方華德佛。In the Northeast direction is San-ch'eng-hsing fo (Buddha) 東北方三乘行佛。In the Zenith is Huang-chung-te fo (Buddha) 上方廣衆德佛。In the Nadir is Ming-te fo (Buddha) 下方明德佛。Like this there are the ten-directions Buddhas, World Honored Ones 如是等十方佛世尊 ...<sup>46</sup>

In this case, Śākyamuni is the teacher and the main Buddha expounding this visualization in this text.<sup>47</sup>

7) *Ta-fang kuang fo hua-yen ching* 大方廣佛華嚴經 ([Buddha] *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, commonly called the “60-chüan” or “Old” *Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經), 60 chüan. Translated by Buddhahadra (from a text obtained by Chih Fa-ling 支法領 in Khotan) beginning on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 14<sup>th</sup> year of I-hsi 義熙 of the Eastern Chin (April 30, 418 A.D.); translation completed in 420; revision/collation finished on the 28<sup>th</sup> day, 12<sup>th</sup> month, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yung-ch'ü 永初, of [Liu] Sung (February 5, 422 A.D.) at the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺 in Yang chou 楊州.<sup>48</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), pp. 395a-788b.

In the “old” or “60-chüan” *Hua-yen ching*, the chapter on “Names of the Buddhas” (如來名號品, in chüan 4, section 3)<sup>49</sup> presents the Buddhas of the ten directions ten different times and in each case the Buddhas are specifically named, and in each case they have different names.<sup>50</sup> This particular case will come up in Chapter 7 (section I.A.1) below in the discussion of the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 6 wall painting of the ten direction Buddhas, which are inscribed.<sup>51</sup>

In section (p'in) 9 in chüan 7, “Buddha Ascending Mount Sumeru,” 佛昇須彌頂, Indra (King of the Heaven of the Thirty-three) welcomes Śākyamuni Buddha as he comes up Mt. Sumeru to Indra's Heaven. Indra recalls how he himself had planted roots of goodness with the Buddhas of the past, and he recites in verses the names and virtues of these Buddhas: Kāśyapa, Kanakamuni, Krakucchanda, Viśvabhū, Śikhin, Vipasyin, (the six immediate predecessors of Śākyamuni) plus Tiṣya (or Puṣya), Tissa, Padma, and Dīpaṃkara (the first four of the 24 Buddhas prior to Śākyamuni), who are here called “the ten Buddhas.”<sup>52</sup> This case would not seem to apply to the Group 18 configuration, since Indra is the main speaker and Śākyamuni is the listener. Also, these ten Buddhas are not associated with directions, so they are probably different from the ten direction Buddhas.

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and apt points made in this thesis, which opens up the study of this important text, the attribution by the CSTCC and *Kao-seng chuan* to Buddhahadra as the translator remains a major reference to contend with.

<sup>46</sup> *Daizōkyō*, 15 (T 643), p. 688b, 27-688c, 3.

<sup>47</sup> During the 424-454 period in the South more visualization sutras appear by three translators: Dharmamitra (T'an-mo-mi-to 曇摩蜜多), Kālayaśas, and Chü-ch'ü Ching-sheng 沮渠京聲.

<sup>48</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 11c, lines 9-10. Korean Catalogue, (K79, p. 43). For more complete discussion of the dates of this translation, see Chapter 7, section I.A.1.a.iii.a) below.

<sup>49</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), pp. 418a-421b.

<sup>50</sup> Alexander Soper briefly characterizes this chapter as follows: Vairocana Buddha “is at the center of the Ten Quarters of Space, in a realm called ‘Lotus Blossom Womb Adornment World Ocean’... Each of the Ten Quarters or ‘Oceans’ is described as a kind of galaxy in itself, with its own Buddhist hierarchy and an infinite number of dependent worlds ...” Soper (1959), p. 196a.

<sup>51</sup> For the translation of the “Names of the Buddha” section in the T'ang translation, see *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, translated by Thomas Cleary, Boulder and London, 1984, Vol. I, pp. 270-275.

<sup>52</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9 (T 278), p. 441.

There are references throughout the *Hua-yen ching* text to the ten directions,<sup>53</sup> including the long last chapter, the *Gandhavyūha* (Ju-fa-chieh, 入法界 “Entering the Dharma World”), chüan 47, (p’in 34.4),<sup>54</sup> but they are not individualized. In the *Gandhavyūha* they occur as a group within the narrative of the mystical projection and explication of the practice of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (P’u-hsien).

Finally, it can be noted that other lists of the ten direction Buddhas occur with entirely different names and differing order of directions in the so-called Pure Land Sutras, which in some cases list the order as East, South, West, North, Nadir, Zenith, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Northeast. There is an extensive discussion of the early Amitābha sutras in Chapter 6 below, and it does not appear that they would pertain to this discussion concerning Group 18.

In ascertaining the identify of the Group 18 images in Cave 169 images, several observations can be made at this juncture.

- 1) Because the analysis of style and technique discussed above suggests a dating ca. 385-400 for Group 18, the most likely textual basis would be either the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* or the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) translated by Dharmarakṣa as the *Cheng fa-hua ching* in 286. Other, less likely, but still possible texts would be those translated by Kumārajīva, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) translated 406 A.D. as the *Miao fa lien hua ching*, and others, such as the *Ta chih-tu lun* and the various “Kuan” (visualization) texts. However, even the texts translated by Kumārajīva might be beyond the time of making the Group 18 configuration, though they can be considered, since their dating is still close to the time of making estimated by the analysis presented in section I.A above.
- 2) The other visualization sutras, especially the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* translated by Buddhahadra has a portion describing the ten direction Buddhas, who are specifically named together with each direction. However, the date of the translation, which may be ca. 411-421, is also somewhat unlikely to have affected the iconography of the Cave 169 Group 18 sculptures. Although one can always think that the practice was current before the actual translation of the text, it is less likely than after the text is translated. Once the text is translated, it can spread more widely, be used more widely, inspire donors to make images in light of the texts, and to provide a wider currency for the accuracy that could be followed for the making of major images.
- 3) The 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra (translation completed in 420; revision/collation completed early in 422 A.D. from Chien-k’ang in the South) is also relatively late to be a basis for the Group 18 sculptures. But it does appear to be the basis for the painting of the ten direction Buddhas in the Group 6 niche in Cave 169, which has black ink inscriptions naming each of the Buddhas together with the direction. In this painting, no central Buddha accompanies the group. As noted above and in Chapter 1, the monk Sheng-chien 聖堅 during the period of Ch’i-fu Kuo-jen (385-387), and probably also the period of Ch’i-fu Ch’ien-kuei (388-412) until at least 406 (see below, Chapter 1 section II. A) under the Western Ch’in, translated the Ju-fa-chieh 入法界 (Entering the Dharma World) section (p’in 品) of the *Hua-yen ching*. This is the *Gandhavyūha* chapter of the *Hua-yen ching*, which near the end mentions the ten directions, though not in reference to a specific group of ten direction Buddhas, but rather within the mystical appearance of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (P’u-hsien), so it, too, is unlikely to be the basis for the Group 18 configuration.

<sup>53</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9 (T 278), pp. 398b, c; 399b; 403a; 404a; 4008a, b, c; 409b, c, etc.

<sup>54</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9 (T 278), pp. 783a, 784a.



In conclusion, the most plausible candidates among these texts would appear to be the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* translated by Lokakṣema and put out in 179 A.D. and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) translated as the *Cheng fa-hua ching* by Dharmarakṣa in ca. 286 in Ch'ang-an. All other texts discussed above are translated later than the stylistic study indicates for the Group 18 images, though they are relatively close in time and could be possible. Except for the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, which briefly presents the visualization focused on Amitābha as one of the ten direction Buddhas, and the *Hua-yen sutra* which presents the main Buddha as Vairocana or Śākyamuni, the other texts all appear to have Śākyamuni Buddha as the main Buddha teaching the visualizations or as subject of the text. Considering the dates of these texts, the content and other relevant factors, the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, especially regarding Śākyamuni and the ten direction Buddhas in Chapter 11, appears to be the most plausible. This will become more clearly credible after a detailed study of the appropriate portions of Chapter 11 of the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, as presented below.

### 3. Group 18 as Representing Śākyamuni and the Ten-Direction Buddhas from Chapter 11 of the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, Dharmarakṣa's 286 A.D. Translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*)

Within the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*),<sup>55</sup> it is Chapter 11 that features the ten-direction Buddhas most prominently. Chapter 11 describes one of the most climactic events of the entire sutra.<sup>56</sup> Among the translations in English (see note 55), except for Kern, who used a Nepalese manuscript dated 1039, the others follow Kumārajīva's Chinese translation. The differences between the Dharmarakṣa (286 A.D.) and the Kumārajīva (406 A.D.) Chinese translations primarily regard wording and certain details. The events portrayed in Chapter 11 are similarly described in each, but Kumārajīva's version is more succinct and clearly written and the translation by Dharmarakṣa is richer and somewhat varied in detail. Because the Dharmarakṣa's *Cheng fa-hua ching* translation is the more likely to have been available to the makers of the Group 18 imagery dating ca. 385-400 A.D. as discussed in section II.A., I will translate here excerpts of Chapter 11 from the Dharmarakṣa text, which itself has not yet been translated into English.

<sup>55</sup> Translations of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) into English include the following major ones (all except that by Kern uses the Kumārajīva translation into Chinese).

1) H. Kern, trans. *The Saddharma-Puṇḍarika or the Lotus of the True Law*, in *Sacred Books of the East*, ed. by F. Max Müller, Vol. XXI, Oxford, 1884 (reprint Delhi, 1965 and 1968). From a Nepalese Sanskrit palm leaf manuscript dated 1039 (also close to the Tibetan version).

2) W. E. Soothill, *The Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, Oxford, 1930. Excerpts and summary from a translation done by Soothill and Bunno Kato from Kumārajīva's Chinese translation.

3) L. Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York, 1976 (reprint 1993). From Kumārajīva's Chinese translation.

4) B. Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra*, New York, 1993. From Kumārajīva's Chinese translation.

5) T. Kubo and A. Yuyama, trans., *The Lotus Sutra*, Berkeley, California, 1993. For the Numata Buddhist Translation and Research series using Kumārajīva's Chinese translation (*Daizōkyō*, No. 262, Vol. IX, pp. 1c12-62b1) along with the "Kasuga Edition" of the *Lotus Sutra* (from the 1263 printed edition of Kumārajīva's Chinese translation now kept in the Tōshōdaiji temple in Nara (see Translator's Introduction, pp. 1-3a).

<sup>56</sup> Chapters 1-20 and Chapter 27 are considered to be the original strata of the *Lotus Sutra* with Chapters 21-26 generally considered to be later (ca. 250) additions (Kern p. xx).



a. *Translation of Excerpts from Chapter 11 of the Cheng fa-hua ching, the Dharmarakṣa 286 A.D. Translation into Chinese of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra (Lotus Sutra)*<sup>57</sup>

In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra (Lotus Sutra)*, Śākyamuni Buddha is teaching on the Vulture Peak near Rajgir in Central India. An extraordinary event occurs at the very opening of Chapter 11: a seven-jewel (treasure) stupa suddenly springs out of the earth in front of the Buddha, who is teaching to the fourfold assembly (monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). This stupa, of vast size and of extraordinarily wondrous appearance, circles around Śākyamuni and then rises and stands in mid-air for all to see.

At that time, in front of the Buddha 爾時佛前, a seven treasure stupa burst forth from the ground 七寶之塔從地踊(涌)出. Twenty-thousand miles (*li*) high, it just happened to appear and encircled the Buddha 高二萬里適現繞佛. It rose up into the empty sky of itself and stood there 超在虛空自然而立. The stupa was extremely excellent in form as if having one thousand variations 其塔殊好色若千變.<sup>58</sup> Five kinds of flowers rained on it, all scattering and mixing, like snow 五種之華而雨其上, 紛紛如雪. It was a majestic and beautifully adorned stupa-temple lecture hall 莊嚴校飾塔寺講堂<sup>59</sup> composed altogether of countless jewels, 以無數寶同共合成, a hundred-thousand railings, windows, balconies and doors, impossible to estimate 百千闌楯牖軒戶不可稱計. (p. 102b, 22-26) A multitude of banners and canopies, hanging gems and jeweled necklaces were suspended from them 懸衆幡蓋垂寶瓔珞, and various strings of bright moon jewels (*maṇi* pearls) were strung up and spread out into the empty sky like myriads of stars 諸明月珠維列虛空猶如衆星. Incense burners and treasure bottles were filled with precious incense 香鑪(爐?)寶瓶滿中名香, and sandalwood fragrances completely suffused into the 3,000 great 1,000 Buddha lands 栴檀芬馨一切普勳(重)三千大千佛之國土. The treasure canopies<sup>60</sup> were decorated with gold, silver, vaidurya, crystal, coral, amber, musāragalva, aśamagarbha, and reached as high as the first heaven 金銀琉璃水精珊瑚虎魄(瑰)車渠馬瑙以爲寶蓋, 其蓋高顯至第一天.<sup>61</sup> Various *devas* of the Trayastriṃśās Heaven<sup>62</sup> as well as the four Heavenly Kings

<sup>57</sup> *Cheng fa-hua ching* 正法華經, chüan 6, section 11 (Seven Treasure Stupa), *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), pp. 102-106, translated by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu 竺法護) in 286 A.D.

<sup>58</sup> The character 色 *se* can be translated as “color” or “form, appearance”. Either one would appear to be appropriate here. However, there is an interesting example of a “Prabhūtaratna stupa” in Korea at the famous Pulguksa temple in Kyōngju (known as the “Tabo t’ap”). It was built of stone in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, the flourishing period of the Unified Silla Dynasty (668-918). The design of this stupa is very unusual and, as far as I know, unique among stupas of Korea or even other areas of Asia. Each level has a different form: the base is solid and square; it supports the next level with four large square corner pillars and the central axis pillar. The next level is octagonal (with a square railing); the next level is octagonal with bamboo shaped small pillars supporting the large circular lotus base of the top level, whose octagonal base and eight short pillars carry the octagonal top slab, above which rises the elaborately carved umbrellas (chattras). Given the variety and change in the structure and details of this stupa, which seems to be literally manifesting the “variations of form” of this wonderful stupa of Prabhūtaratna as described in the *Cheng fa-hua ching (Lotus Sutra)*, I am translating “se” as form rather than as color. From the Pulguksa Tabo t’ap we can obtain some idea of how a stupa could have “one-thousand variations of form”.

<sup>59</sup> “Stupa-temple lecture hall” 塔寺講堂 is an interesting term and I am leaving it translated literally, as it may actually be some indication of the appearance of this special stupa. It appears to be the combination of the stupa and a shrine (a śārīra shrine for Prabhūtaratna) and a lecture hall. The term t’a-ssu 塔寺 is said to be the same as the Sanskrit for stupa (t’a 塔) in Chinese translations according to some scholars. See S. Karashima, *The Textual Study of the Chinese Versions of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra in the Light of the Sanskrit and the Tibetan Versions*, Tokyo, 1992, p. 329 (in reference to the usage in line 102c13).

<sup>60</sup> The series of umbrellas or chattras arranged on the axis pole (yaṣṭi) at the top of a Buddhist stupa.

<sup>61</sup> The lowest of the six heavens of the Desire Realm; referring to the four heavens and palaces of the four Heavenly Kings (one for each of the four quarters of space).

<sup>62</sup> “Heaven of the Thirty-three”; second of the six heavens of the Desire Realm.

all scattered scented flowers and paid homage to the seven treasure stupa 切利諸天及四天王, 皆散意華供養七寶塔。

From inside this stupa-temple a voice came out by itself 其塔寺中自然發聲, praising and saying, “Excellent! Excellent! World Honored One, peacefully abiding 歎言, 善哉善哉世尊安住. Indeed it is exactly as you say 審如所言. Your virtue is profoundly subtle, transcendent without comparison, universal, just like empty space, true without difference 道德玄妙超絕無侶, 慧平等一猶如虛空, 實無有異.” (p. 102c, 2-5)

At that time the fourfold assembly<sup>63</sup> saw the seven treasure stupa in the empty sky, high, great and wonderful 時四部衆見七寶塔, 在於虛空高大微(嚴)妙. How imposing! Its measureless light was so glorious and blazing that there was no place it did not illuminate 巍巍無量光耀(耀)??燁燁, 靡所不照. They proclaimed, “Excellent!” jumping joyously and standing with hands together looking up in respect and honor without being weary 頌宣善哉, 歡喜踊躍叉手而立, 瞻戴無厭. (p. 102c, 5-8)

At the time there was a Bodhisattva called Mahāpratibhāna (Ta-pien 大辯) 時有菩薩, 名曰大辯, who realized that the heavenly beings and people had some doubts 見諸天人心懷猶豫. (p. 102c, 8-9) They were apprehensive and happy, and they wished to be able to know about this 乍悲乍喜欲得知此; what was the cause of this auspicious response 何所瑞應. Therefore he went forward and asked Buddha 故前問佛, “O, World Honored One, wherefore does this seven treasure stupa-temple appear in front of the Bhagavat 唯然世尊, 今者何故, 七寶塔寺現大聖前? It’s height and width are without limit and there is none who does not see it 高廣無極莫不見者. And from the treasure stupa-temple a voice came out by itself praising and saying, ‘Excellent!’ 而寶塔寺自然出聲讚曰善哉. What cause is the influence having this auspicious omen 何所感動而有此瑞?” (p. 102c, 9-12)

The World Honored One then told Mahāpratibhāna Bodhisattva 世尊則告大辯菩薩, “This treasure stupa-temple has a Tathāgata’s body 此寶塔寺有如來身. Definitely the form is complete and without defect 完(貌)具一定而無(不)缺減. (p. 102c, 12-14) An incalculable distance from here in the eastern direction 東方去此不可計會 there was a Buddha world with a Buddha called To-pao (Prabhūtaratna) Tathāgata 諸佛世界有佛號名多寶如來. The land was called Pao-ching (Ranaviśuddha) 國曰寶淨. (p. 102c, 14-15) When he was practicing in his past life for the attainment of enlightenment, he put out a vow 本行道時而自發願: ‘I will, by means of this Cheng fa-hua ching (*Lotus Sutra*), myself practice and complete Enlightenment 吾會當以此正法華經當自修成, and cause all Bodhisattvas to be able to hear and receive [this sutra] 使諸菩薩皆得聽聞受.’ (p. 102c, 15-17) Afterwards he sat beneath the Bodhi tree, and then completed the right, true enlightenment 然後乃坐於佛樹下 還成無上正真之道. What that Buddha thought is indeed the same as what he said, and indeed what he said, is 其佛所念志果如所言: ‘For sentient beings in the ten-directions I will expound the Dharma of this sutra 為諸十方講說經法, to alleviate them by teaching all,<sup>64</sup> and entirely cause [them] to obtain Enlightenment 開化一切皆令得道.’ (p. 102c, 17-20) At the time when this Buddha was on the point of wishing Parinirvāṇa 於時其佛臨欲滅度後, he widely proclaimed to the various heavenly beings, worldly people and to the various bhikṣus 普告諸天世間人民及諸比丘, ‘After my Parinirvāṇa, to venerate the Tathāgata’s body, take the whole body and build a great stupa with complete decoration 吾滅度後, 奉如來身全取其體, 一等完具興大塔寺. Those who see this stupa will obtain the cause of limitless merit and virtue 若見塔者 悉得其所, 功德難限. (p. 102c, 20-23). At the time when a Buddha establishes indeed limitless

<sup>63</sup> Monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen (bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇī, upāsaka, upāsikā).

<sup>64</sup> “K’ai-hua”: to transform the character by instruction; to teach. Soothill (1937), p. 193. “i-chieh” (Sarva), all, the whole. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

saintly transformations 于時其佛，建立如是無極聖化<sup>65</sup> that lecture and explain this Fa-hua ching (*Lotus Sutra*) in the worlds of the ten-directions 十方世界其有講說此法華經, then my seven treasure stupa 吾七寶塔 will suddenly appear at the place where the sutra is being taught [by those various Buddhas] 踊現諸佛所說經處, and this śarīra body inside the seven treasure stupa will praise and say, ‘Excellent!’ 其舍利身在七寶塔，讚言善哉.”<sup>66</sup> (p. 102c, 23-26)

The Buddha said to Mahāpratibhāna 佛告大辯, “This seven-treasure stupa is located in the eastern direction and then down, from here passing Buddha lands as countless as the sands of the Ganges River 是七寶塔在于東方而處於下，去是無量江河沙佛土. It had not yet ever appeared before in the empty sky 在於虛空未曾出現. Now [we] see [it because of] the benevolence of the Tathāgata’s correct enlightenment ...今見能仁如來正覺 ...<sup>67</sup> (p. 102c, 26-28)

... Buddha said to Mahāpratibhāna, “Now To-pao Tathāgata, Arhat, is in this stupa-temple 佛告大辯 今者多寶如來至真在斯塔寺. From far away he heard the teaching of the Cheng fa-hua (*Lotus Sutra*) text 遙聞說此正法華典. Because of this [the stupa] sprang out with the praising words ‘Excellent!’ 是以踊出讚言善哉.”<sup>68</sup> (p. 103, 17-18)

Mahāpratibhāna Bodhisattva again asked Buddha saying, “O, World Honored One, 大辯菩薩(復) 白佛言唯然世尊, now I and others who came and assembled wish to be able to gaze on and see To-pao Buddha’s form 今我等類諸來會者，欲得覩見多寶佛形. Wishing that the bestowed grace and compassion increase by means of the awesome spirit 願垂恩慈加以威神, to let the various ones who came each obtain that which will open up their great Path 使諸來者各得其所開發大道.” (p. 103a, 19-21)

<sup>65</sup> The term “sheng-hua 聖化 (saintly transformations) and others like it encountered later in the chapter, such as hua-hsiang 化像 (transformation image) and hua ju-lai 化如來 (transformation Tathāgata), are one of the most important elements of Chapter 11 and integral to understanding the probable identity of the Group 18 configuration. In his English translation of Kumārajīva’s Chinese text of the *Lotus Sutra* where the comparable term is “fo-fen-shen” 佛分身, Leon Hurvitz uses the word “emanations”, explaining as follows: “*Ātmabhāvavagraha* in the Sanskrit. There is a difficulty with the precise meaning of this word. I take it to mean a partial or separate manifestation (*vigraha*) of the essence (*ātmabhāva*, “self-being”) of the Universal Buddha. The Ch. *fen shen* (“divided body” of the Buddha’s body) seems to be getting at the same thing. In popular Mahāyāna lore, a Buddha can divide his own body into an infinite number of Buddha-bodies. The Sanskrit ... seems to be stressing Many Jewels’s [i.e., Prabhūtaratna’s] power to appear anywhere at will, while Kumārajīva’s version seems to be saying that he can divide himself up into a great number of Buddhas, any one of whom can appear anywhere.” L. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York, 1976, p. 185 (footnote). Here Hurvitz appears to use the term in reference to Prabhūtaratna at this point in the translation, but in the Dharmarakṣa text it appears to me to refer to Śākyamuni.

<sup>66</sup> This last sentence is translated with respect to Kumārajīva’s translation by Burton Watson as follows: “That Buddha, through his transcendental powers and the power of his vow, insures that, throughout the worlds in the ten directions, no matter in what place, if there are those who preach the Lotus Sutra, this treasure tower will in all cases come forth and appear in their presence, and his complete body will be in the tower, speaking words of praise and saying, Excellent, excellent!” Watson (1993), p. 172.

<sup>67</sup> From this point through the end of the verses on p. 103a, line 16 is omitted here. That part could be a interpolation into the narrative; it does not add to or co-ordinate with the flow of the narrative, and may be the result of a combining of parts, perhaps of another version of the text, at some point either before or when Dharmarakṣa translated it. This portion is not included in the Kumārajīva translation. The section which is skipped here is an explanation of Śākyamuni’s attitudes and actions during his quest for enlightenment.

<sup>68</sup> This passage from Kumārajīva’s text is translated by Kubo and Yuyama as follows: “O Mahāpratibhāna! The tathāgata Prabhūtaratna has now emerged from the earth, within his stupa, so that he may hear the Lotus Sutra and give praise with the words, ‘Splendid, splendid!’” Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 181. Burton Watson gives the following translation: “Great Joy of Preaching, now this tower of the Thus Come One Many Treasures, because it heard the preaching of the Lotus Sutra, has come forth out of the ground and speaks words of praise, saying, Excellent, excellent!” Watson (1993), p. 172.

Buddha said to Mahāpratibhāna Bodhisattva 佛告大辯菩薩, “To-pao Tathāgata originally also vowed 多寶如來本亦自誓: ‘[Whereby] my stupa-temple reaches that area 我之塔寺所至方面, hearing this sutra text being taught by the Tathāgata [in that area] to the fourfold assembly 聽此經典設如來及四部衆, and [if the assembly] wishes to gaze on my body 欲觀吾身, [and] consequently all those from the ten-directions who wish this 隨其十方之所欲願, all must be able to see and altogether pay homage to (kung-yang) these transformed images 皆當得見 咸共供養於此化像.’ (p. 103a, 21-25) Mahāpratibhāna 大辯, [those] wishing to know my body 欲知我身, also must be grateful to these various Buddhas of the ten-directions 亦當感是十方諸佛, and all the worlds of the transformed Tathāgatas, who are teaching the Dharma, now should all come here 一切世界所化如來, 講說法者皆令詣此.”<sup>69</sup> (p. 103a, 25-27)

At that time Mahāpratibhāna Bodhisattva again said to Buddha 爾時大辯菩薩復白佛言, “O, World Honored One, bestow and increase this great grace 唯然世尊 垂加大恩 and everywhere [let] appear the saintly virtue of the various Buddhas of all the lands of the ten-directions 普現一切十方國土諸佛聖德.” Buddha silently agreed 佛默然可. (p. 103a, 27-29)

Immediately from the white hair (ūrṇā) between his eyebrows there emitted a subtle and mysterious light 即時演放眉間白毛微妙光明 that universally shone in all ten-directions to each and every one of the hundred-million, hundred-thousand various Buddha lands as many as the sands of five-hundred Ganges Rivers 普照十方各各五百江河沙等億百千數諸佛國土. (p. 103a, 29–103b, 2) All the World Honored Ones, each and every one, appeared 一切世尊各各普現 resting in their (Buddha) land, sitting below a tree on a rare, adorned lion dais (seat) wonderful beyond compare 止其國土坐於樹下奇妙莊嚴師子之座 with numberless hundred-thousand Bodhisattvas 與無央數百千菩薩 (p. 103b, 1-4) on wonderful seats [adorned] with a *nishidana* cloth<sup>70</sup> with jewels resembling drops of dew 在寶交露布好座具. The canopies, made with hanging silken banners, were a rare and extraordinary [sight] 珍琦殊異懸繒幡蓋 hanging down on four sides above the various Buddhas’ seats 垂於四面諸佛座上(之). For the various multitude of beings, [the Buddhas] taught the sutra’s Dharma 為諸衆生講說經法 with melodious sounds, none of which did not expound and reach to the hundred-thousand Bodhisattvas who openly received what they heard 音聲柔靡不解達百千菩薩啓受所聞. (p. 103b, 4-6) There was no one who did not see the various Buddhas, more than countless hundred-thousand, hundred million difficult-to-count grains of sands of countless Ganges Rivers in the East, West, South and North, the four intermediate directions, Zenith and Nadir 東西南北四隅上下無數百千億難量江河沙等諸佛世界皆亦如是靡不見者. (p. 103b, 7-8)

At that time each of the ten-direction Buddhas told the Bodhisattvas and various people 時十方佛各各自告諸菩薩等諸族姓子: “You must go to visit the Sahā World and see the benevolent Buddha, the Tathāgata, Arhat<sup>71</sup> 汝輩當往詣忍世界見能仁佛如來至真. Also you must look up with respect to

<sup>69</sup> This passage in the Kumārajīva text is translated by Burton Watson as follows: “The buddha said to the bodhisattva and mahasattva Joy of Preaching, ‘This Many Treasures Buddha has taken a profound vow, saying, ‘When my treasure tower, in order to listen to the Lotus Sutra, comes forth into the presence of one of the Buddhas, if there should be those who wish me to show my body to the four kinds of believers, then let the various Buddhas who are emanations of that Buddha and who are preaching the Law in the worlds in the ten directions all return and gather around that Buddha in a single spot. Only when that has been done will my body become visible.’ Great Joy of Preaching, I will now gather together the various Buddhas that are emanations of my body and that are preaching the law in the worlds in the ten directions.” B. Watson, *The Lotus Sutra*, New York, 1993, p. 172.

<sup>70</sup> The cloth for Buddha to sit on. Soothill (1937), p. 234a.

<sup>71</sup> That is, Śākyamuni Buddha.



the form image stupa-temple of To-pao, World Honored One 并當瞻戴多寶世尊形像塔寺。” (p. 103b, 8-11)

At that time in the Sahā World there spontaneously appeared those who had merit and good virtue and especially subtle and powerful spirit 彼時於此忍界所有功勳善德殊雅威神自然而現. The various seven treasure trees were surrounding and living 七寶諸樹周匝而生. (p. 103b, 11-13) The land all transformed to be lapis lazuli (violet vaiduriya) 其地悉變為紺琉璃 with polished red gold making long strings continuously adorning the eight paths that were festooned with jewels like dew drops 以紫磨金而為長繩 連綿莊飾八交路(露)道. The land became flat and even, and the various chūn, countries, hsien, cities and villages, great oceans, rivers and springs, all were removed and entirely did not reappear 其地平正 除諸郡國縣邑村落大海江河川流泉源(原) 皆不復現. (p. 103b, 13-16) But instead there appeared spontaneously various great incense burners burning with abundant precious incense, and heavenly flowers raining everywhere on this Buddha land 但見自然諸天(大)香鑪燒衆名香 普雨天華於此佛土. (p. 103b, 16-17) At that time various heavenly beings and people were moved away to other Buddha countries 應時移徙諸天人民在他佛國. Then, to the various multitude that was assembled, there appeared various banners made of the seven jewels 時諸衆會現在七寶諸交路七寶帳. The various bejeweled curtains were majestically and subtly adorned 諸交路帳莊嚴殊妙, [and it was] impossible to estimate their spreading over this Buddha land 不可稱量遍此佛土. (p. 103b, 17-19).

At that time all the various Buddhas of the ten-directions 時彼十方一切諸佛, each having attendants, also returned and came here to visit this Sahā world 各有侍者 亦復來詣此忍界. Each and every one came under an abundant treasure tree 各各至於衆寶樹下. These various treasure trees were 22,000 miles (li) high 此諸寶樹高二萬二千里 with branches, leaves, flowers and fruits on each and every one growing profusely and prosperously 枝葉華實各各茂盛. (p. 103b, 19-22) Below each treasure tree was a lion dais 20,000 miles high 斯寶樹下有師子床, 高二萬里, decorated with lots of unusual rare jewels making a seat [for each] Tathāgata to sit on 皆以奇寶衆珍為座如來座上. Once each had arrived, within these 3,000 (great thousand) worlds, only various Buddhas were seen everywhere 如是比像, 於此三千(大千)世界, 但見諸佛靡不周遍. (p. 103b, 22-25) Is this not the transformation appearance of Shih-chia-wen Tathāgata, Arhat, Correctly Enlightened? 非是釋迦文如來至真等正覺之所變現也? From each of the ten-direction Buddha lands they [the Buddhas and attendants] came here 各從十方諸佛刹土而來到此. This expresses the great path and limitless virtue 顯示大道無極之德. At that time the World Honored One, Shih-chia-wen [Buddha], changed (pien) various Tathāgatas to transformed form images 爾時世尊釋迦文佛. 變諸如來所化形像. (p. 103b, 25-28)

In the eight directions each of the 20 thousand million lands were entirely without hells, hungry ghosts, or animals 在於八方各二萬億所有國土皆無地獄餓鬼畜生. (p. 103b, 28-29) The various heavenly beings and Asuras were moved to the various Buddha worlds of other regions 移徙諸天及阿須倫在於他方諸佛世界.<sup>72</sup> (p. 103b, 29-p. 103c, 1) The ground of the various 20 thousand-million Buddha lands was caused (ordered) to be of lapis lazuli (violet vaidurya) 令二萬億諸佛國土地紺琉璃. All the trees were changed to be of the seven jewels with a height of 22,000 miles 皆以七寶變成樹木其諸寶樹高二萬里, with branches, leaves, flowers and fruit each and every one all growing profusely 枝葉華實各各茂盛. (p. 103c, 1-3) The various lion seats were 20,000 miles high 諸師子座高二萬里. These

<sup>72</sup> This passage is translated from the Kumārajīva text by Kubo and Yuyama as follows: “At that time Śākyamuni Buddha, wanting to be able to receive all of his separate Buddha-forms, transformed and purified two hundred myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of lands in each of the world systems in the eight directions. There were no hells, ever-hungry spirits, beasts or *asuras*; and all the *devas* and humans were moved to other lands.” Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 182.

various Buddha lands were entirely flat and even 此諸佛土而皆平正, without having rivers, oceans, or running springs 無有河海(衆)泉流泉(源); also without various mountains, Mt. Muchalinda, Great Mt. Muchalinda, Mt. Sumeru, king [of mountains], Mt. Chakravāḍa, or Great Mt. Chakravāḍa 亦無諸山目隣大目隣(山)須彌山王鐵圍大鐵圍(山)...(p. 103c, 3-6)<sup>73</sup>

... At that time the Shih-chia-wen-fo transformed Tathāgatas 釋迦文佛所化如來 in the East direction with temple banners as many as sands of the Ganges river, and proclaiming the Way, all again came and reached [here] 在於東方恒沙等剎班宣道教, 皆復來至.<sup>74</sup> (p. 103c, 18-19) The ten-direction worlds each 300 million various perfectly enlightened Buddhas all came here 十方世界各三千(十)億諸佛正覺, 皆詣來此. [These] Tathāgatas all sat on lion treasure dais-seats 如來(而)悉坐於師子寶床. (p. 103c, 18-21) Each had treasure flowers and received various attendants 各取寶華授諸侍者, various clans and families 諸族姓子 who were told [by these Tathāgatas]: “Go to the Vulture Peak where the benevolent Buddha is 汝等往詣耑闍崛山能仁佛所, tell my name, in respect offer greetings without limit 致吾名字敬問無量 and inquire about his health—asking, ‘Are you physically strong and at ease as always?’ 聖體康強力勢如常所遊安耶 (p. 103c, 21-23) With these many flowers and offerings by spreading them out to the Buddha and various Bodhisattvas and the many disciples, proclaim what I said 以此衆華供散彼佛及諸菩薩衆弟子上宣我所言.” Lots of places are transformed 多所開化. (p. 103c, 23-25) Thereupon Shih-chia-wen Tathāgata, Arhat, appeared as various transformed [Tathāgatas], each and every one sitting on a lion seat 於是釋迦文如來至真. 見諸所化各各坐於師子之座. And various attendants all gathered and assembled and offered flowers in worship (kung-yang) 及諸皆來侍者集會齋華供養. (p. 103c, 25-27)

Then [Śākyamuni], from sitting, rose up into the empty sky 即從坐起住於虛空. (p. 103c 27) The fourfold assembly all also rose with their palms together, and stood up 四部之衆悉亦各起叉手而立.<sup>75</sup> Buddha with a finger opened the seven jewel temple lecture hall door 佛以手指開七寶寺講堂之戶. (p. 103c, 27-29) Revolving [opening] thusly, a penetrating and dazzling light like the sun came out 亘然通徹晃若日出. It was as though opening a great country’s city gate with the key (bar lock) [and] letting the gate go back and forth on its axle without hindrance 譬如開於大國城門. 而以管籥去其關軸內外無礙. (p. 103c, 29-p.104a, 1) Shih-chia-wen fo with two fingers opened the seven treasure temple lecture hall’s door 釋迦文佛以手兩指. 開寶寺講堂之戶. There appeared his [Prabhūtaratna’s] awesome respectful virtue unable to estimate the limit and also [Śākyamuni did] again like this 現其威德不可稱限亦復若[如]玆. (p. 104a, 1-3) The Tathāgata opened the seven jewel temple door 如來這[適]開七寶寺之戶. To-pao Tathāgata, Arhat, etc., correctly enlightened body then immediately appeared 多寶如來至真等正覺身即現矣! (p. 104a, 3-4) Sitting on a lion dais with skin color like before 坐師子床肌色如故, also not withered or parched 亦不枯燥, imposing light and straight pose with all the marks good like a painting 威光端正(政)相好如畫, he resoundingly (“with heavy voice”) proclaimed 口重宣言, “Excellent! Excellent! Shih-chia-wen-fo, explicating this sutra text 善哉善哉, 釋迦文佛, 說

<sup>73</sup> Page 103c, line 6 to page 103, line 18 is omitted here; it consists of more description of the purified worlds.

<sup>74</sup> Kumārajīva’s text translated by Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 183 is as follows: “Then the separate Buddha-forms of Śākyamuni Buddha which had been teaching the Dharma in the hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *ayutas* of land in the east, equal in number to the sands of the Ganges, gathered here.”

<sup>75</sup> Kumārajīva’s text of this passage as translated by Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 184 is as follows: “Then the Buddha Śākyamuni saw that his separate Buddha-forms had already gathered and were each sitting on a lion-seat. And he heard that all the Buddhas also wanted him to open the treasured stupa. Immediately rising he hovered in the air and the entire fourfold assembly rose and gazed attentively at the Buddha with their palms pressed together.”



此經典. How wonderful! Because of wishing to hear this sutra Dharma, therefore I myself came out and appeared 何其快乎吾以欲聞此經法故, 故自出現!” (p. 104a, 3-8)

At that time the fourfold assembly saw To-pao Tathāgata, Arhat, etc., Correctly Enlightened 時四部衆見多寶如來至真等正覺, who listened since [his] Parinirvāṇa and leaving this world, and since then was not able to count 100 million-100 thousand *kalpas* of listening and saying “Excellent” 聞其滅度去世以(已)來不可稱計億百千劫, 聽言善哉. [Everyone was] very much greatly surprised that this had never happened before 甚大驚怪初未曾有. Then in paying homage (kung-yang), [they] spread heavenly flowers on Shih-chia-wen-fo and To-pao Tathāgata 即以天華, 供養散於釋迦文佛多寶如來. (p. 104a, 8-10) At that time To-pao fo (Buddha) was sitting on half the seat with Shih-chia-wen 時多寶佛則以半座與釋迦文. [Previously] there was a voice coming out from inside the seven treasure temple saying “Shih-chia-wen-fo please sit on this dais 七寶寺中有聲出曰, 釋迦文佛願坐此床.” (p. 104a 10-13) Shih-chia-wen-fo (Buddha) immediately did as he said 釋迦文佛輒(轉)如其言. [So] at that time, the two Tathāgatas together at one place in the empty sky sat together on the lion dais [adorned with] seven jewels like drops of dew 時二如來共同一處, 在於虛空, 七寶交露坐師子床. (p. 104a, 13-14)

At that time in the fourfold assembly each thought, saying 時四部衆各心念言: “The Buddhas, Perfect Truth and Virtue, are high and far away so [we] are not able to reach [them] 諸佛至真道德高遠而不可逮. (p. 104a, 15-16) How imposing! difficult to calculate, impossible to explain its limit 巍巍難量不可稱限. [We] only wish that the Tathāgata would bestow his thoughts [on us] and with awesome spiritual grace 唯願如來垂意念加威神恩 cause us all together to be placed in the empty sky 令我等輩俱處虛空.” (p. 104a, 16-17)

Buddha knew what they thought 佛知所念, and put forth supernatural power<sup>76</sup> 現神足力 and caused the fourfold assembly by itself [to have] a far high place in the empty sky 使四部衆自然超上處於虛空. (p. 104a, 17-19) Then Śākyamuni Buddha (Shih-chia-wen-fo) said to the fourfold assembly and various bhikṣus 時釋迦文佛告四部衆諸比丘等, “With regard to this Sahā world, who is able to sustain and be responsible for teaching this sutra text 於此忍界誰能堪任說是此經典? (p. 104a, 19-20) Now this is the time; also this is the great ceremonial affair 今是其時亦是大節. The Tathāgata’s appearance here will be followed by his Parinirvāṇa 如來現在若滅度後. [You] must receive this Dharma to uphold; chanting, studying and reciting 當受此法持誦讀誦. (p. 104a, 20-22) Now the Tathāgata’s body joyfully wishes for Parinirvāṇa 今如來身幸欲滅度. Bhikṣus must bestow the Tathāgata with correct kung-yang (worship) affairs 比丘當捨如來所供養事之誼(宜) and uphold deep respect for this sutra text 奉順恭敬於此經典.” With this [he] spoke praising saying 於時(是)說頌曰, ... (p. 104a, 22-24).

In the verses that follow, Śākyamuni reiterates the main points of the events in the chapter. He stresses the theme of causing the Dharma and this sutra to endure. He describes with vivid metaphors how difficult that will be, and urges everyone to make the ultimate offering of preserving, guarding, teaching, etc. this sutra. After his nirvāṇa, he says that it will be difficult to hear and accept, understand its meaning, write it, teach it, propagate it, etc., but if one can, then that person will have the respect of all heavenly and sentient beings.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *Riddhipāda* (deva foot), supernatural power. Soothill (1937) p. 335.

<sup>77</sup> The translation of these verses at the end of Chapter 11 by Hurvitz (1976), pp. 188-194 from the Kumārajīva text is relatively close to the verses in the Dharmarakṣa text.

b. *Application of Chapter 11 of the Cheng-fa-hua ching (Dharmarakṣa Translation of the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra) to the Cave 169 Group 18 Sculptures*

The Group 18 configuration appears to plausibly relate to the sustained and graphic narrative of the Chapter 11 of the *Cheng-fa-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*) in a significant number of ways, as follows.

There is substantial and meaningful usage of the “Buddhas of the ten-directions” and its variations in Chapter 11. The various terms, notably, the various ten-direction Buddhas (shih-fang-chu-fo 十方諸佛), various ten-direction Buddha realms (shih-fang...chu fo kuo-t’u 十方...諸佛國土), and ten-direction worlds (shih-fang shih-chieh 十方世界), are a major component within the unfolding narrative. They are not portrayed simply as a formality or passing reference, merely mentioned sporadically or as a kind of repetitious background element, but are integral players in the development of the events and significant for their religious content and connotation. Similarly, in the Group 18 sculptures in Cave 169, the ten major dhyānāsana Buddhas are not treated formalistically, but given definite thought with regard to position and size, so that each one seems individually unique and important and not simply one of a repetitive number.

In Chapter 11 there is a definite, step-by-step development in the manner, wording, and relative importance in the way the ten-direction Buddhas are mentioned and described. They increase in intensity and elaboration with each successive occurrence up to the climatic moment of opening the door of Prabhūtaratna’s stupa:

- 1) Both the “ten-direction worlds” and the “ten-direction various Buddhas” are first mentioned early in the chapter in the passage where Śākyamuni relates the vows of Prabhūtaratna (p. 102c, 24 and p. 103a, 25-26 respectively);
- 2) Then, Mahāpratibhāna Bodhisattva requests of Śākyamuni to see the “ten-direction Buddha land’s various Buddhas’ saintly virtue.” (p. 103a, 28);
- 3) In direct response to Mahāpratibhāna’s request, Buddha actually illuminates with light from the white hair between his eyebrows (the ūrṇā) the myriad Buddha lands of the ten-directions (here there are “myriad” in each direction, and all the Buddhas appear under jewel trees on lion dais, etc.) (p. 103b, 1-2);
- 4) Then, countless numbers of various Buddhas that are specifically noted to be “in the East, West, South, North, intermediate directions, Zenith and Nadir” all tell their Bodhisattvas and people that they must go to the Sahā world (our world of suffering) to pay respects to Śākyamuni Buddha and to the form-image-stupa-temple of Prabhūtaratna (p. 103b, 7-11);
- 5) All Buddhas of the ten-directions, each with attendants, then come to the Sahā world (after it had been made pure by Śākyamuni) (p. 103b, 19-20);
- 6) From each of the ten-direction Buddha lands the Buddhas came, and we are told that this expresses the great path and limitless virtue of Śākyamuni, who “changed various Tathāgatas to transformed form images” (p. 103b, 25-28);
- 7) Specifically regarding the East direction, the ten-direction worlds each 300 million perfectly enlightened Buddhas all reached here (and inquired about the health of Śākyamuni and made offerings) and it is repeated and made even clearer that “Shih-chia-wen appeared as various transformed Tathāgatas, each and every one on a lion seat.” (p. 103c, 18-19).

Following this extended build-up and preparation, in which the ten-direction Buddhas, who are the “transformation forms” of Śākyamuni, are all brought to this world (in fulfillment of the vow

of Prabhūtaratna), which had become purified and made a pure land by Śākyamuni, the Buddha Śākyamuni rises in the air and opens the door of Prabhūtaratna's stupa to reveal Prabhūtaratna's perfect real form body shining with light inside.

Following Śākyamuni's rising in the air and opening Prabhūtaratna's stupa, the ten-direction Buddhas are not mentioned again until the final verses of this episode where the Buddha Śākyamuni stresses the importance of the transmission of this sutra and the vow needed to guard and uphold, teach and explicate this sutra after his immanent Parinirvāṇa. In the verses Śākyamuni reiterates in clear terms that the vow is taken before Śākyamuni, Prabhūtaratna and the ten-direction Buddhas that are the transformation forms of Śākyamuni.

Given the obvious importance of the ten-direction Buddhas and their manifestation as transformations of Śākyamuni in Chapter 11, it is plausible to see how they could be so importantly represented in a large sculptural tableau, such as the upper part of the West (main) Wall of Cave 169. This remarkable, extensive and vivid usage within a narrative context is unlike the other Mahāyāna texts mentioned in section II.B.2 above.

The prominence of the Group 18 location in Cave 169 is suitable for representation of the grand unfolding sequence of events described in Chapter 11. These events are taking place on a vastly great cosmic scale involving Śākyamuni and the fourfold assembly, the Buddha Prabhūtaratna from the remote past appearing in his stupa as a perfect, complete Buddha, and with visions of myriad worlds in all directions miraculously shown by Śākyamuni with the ray of light from his ūrṇā that reveals all the Buddhas and Buddha worlds of the ten-directions, the subsequent purification by Śākyamuni of this Sahā World (our impure world) and even more worlds in order to properly receive the countless Buddhas and their attendants who come from the ten-directions to pay respect and witness the opening of Prabhūtaratna's stupa by Śākyamuni. The climactic moment arrives; all is in readiness and everyone, including countless ten-direction Buddhas, who are the transformations of Śākyamuni, and the fourfold assembly are all focused on Śākyamuni in anticipation of his opening of the stupa of Prabhūtaratna, a Buddha whose Parinirvāṇa occurred in the remote past. Śākyamuni rises into the air from his seat and with two fingers opens the door, like opening a great city gate. Everyone sees the flood of light and the perfect body of the Buddha Prabhūtaratna sitting inside on a lion throne. It is no doubt an amazing sight, held in suspense until Prabhūtaratna speaks, praising Śākyamuni and inviting him to come inside and sit beside him on his seat. The fourfold assembly wishes to come closer, so Śākyamuni miraculously raises the fourfold assembly into the air and everyone is then hovering high in the air in front of Prabhūtaratna's stupa wherein both Buddhas are sitting side by side together, sharing the lion seat. Then Śākyamuni, after all this miraculous unfolding of events, announces his immanent Parinirvāṇa and speaks out his request, also witnessed by Prabhūtaratna and all the countless Buddhas of the ten-directions, that those assembled will take a vow to teach, protect and preserve this best of all teachings, the *Lotus Sutra*.

The greater part of the chapter is devoted to the build-up of the scene, to the climactic point when Śākyamuni is poised to open the door of the stupa to reveal Prabhūtaratna, a Buddha already countless eons ago passed into Parinirvāṇa. The Group 18 configuration appears to represent the moment of climactic anticipation, just prior to the opening of the stupa. The large standing Buddha, who would be Śākyamuni, is not in a teaching mode, so he is not teaching at this time. He is standing, not seated, in the position described in the Dharmarakṣa text as follows: "Then [Śākyamuni], from sitting, rose up into the empty sky 即從坐起住於虛空." (p. 103c, 27). In the Group 18 sculpture Śākyamuni is depicted standing in the air surrounded by his own transformed Buddhas from the ten-directions. The

fourfold assembly is not indicated specifically in the sculpture, but the actual human visitors to the cave can be taken to represent the assembly.

If we take Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) as the basis for the Group 18 representation, then we can attempt an identification in terms of the direction of each of the ten-direction Buddhas, who are designated in a particular order in the text (in the passage where Śākyamuni first illumines the ten-direction worlds with the light from the white hair between his eyebrows (ūrṇā). In Dharmarakṣa's translation (286 A.D.), the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, the pertinent phrases are as follows:

“There was no one who did not see the various Buddhas, more than countless hundred-thousand, hundred million difficult-to-count grains of sands of countless Ganges Rivers in the East, West, South and North, the four intermediate directions, Zenith and Nadir 東西南北四隅上下無數百千億姦難量江河沙等諸佛世界皆亦如是靡不見者. (p. 103b, 7-8) At that time each of the ten-direction Buddhas told the Bodhisattvas and various people 時十方佛各各自告諸菩薩等諸族性子: “You must go to visit the Saha World and see the benevolent Buddha, the Tathāgata, Arhat<sup>78</sup> 汝輩當往詣忍世界見能仁佛如來至真.

In Kumārajīva's translation (406 A.D.) of the same passage in the *Miao fa lien hua ching*, we find the following:

即見東方五百億那由他河沙等國土諸佛...南西北方四維上下. 白毫相光所照之處. 亦復如是.<sup>79</sup>

This passage is translated by Leon Hurvitz as follows: “... At that time, the Buddha emitted a single glow from his white hair-tuft, by which straightway were seen the Buddhas of lands in the eastern quarter equal in number of the sands of five hundred myriads of millions of nayutas of Ganges rivers ... To the south, the west, and the north, to the four intermediate directions as well as upwards and downward, wherever the glow of the white hair-tuft reached, it was also thus.”<sup>80</sup>

The same passage is translated by Kubo and Yayuma (characters added): “Then the buddha emitted a ray of light from the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows; and they immediately saw the Buddhas of five hundred myriads of kotis of nayutas of lands in the eastern direction equal in number to the sands of the Ganges 即見東方五百億那由他河沙等國土諸佛 ... The other direction to the south, north and west [according to the text in the *Daizōkyō*, should be south, west and north, as seen in the character quote above],<sup>81</sup> the four intermediary directions, and the upper and lower regions were also illuminated by the ray of light emitted from the tuft of white hair between the buddha's eyebrows; and they were also exactly like this” 南西北方四維上下. 白毫相光所照之處. 亦復如是.<sup>82</sup>

According to the translation of Burton Watson: “At that time the buddha emitted a ray of light from the tuft of white hair [between his eyebrows], immediately making visible the buddhas of the eastern region in lands as numerous as five hundred ten thousand million nayutas of Ganges sands ... In the southern, western and northern regions wherever the beam from the rift of white hair, a characteristic feature of the Buddha, shone, the same was true.”<sup>83</sup>

Looking at both the Dharmarakṣa (286 A.D.) and Kumārajīva (406 A.D.) examples, they can be applied to the Group 18 ten-direction Buddhas as follows (using the numbered diagram in Fig. 4.6).

<sup>78</sup> That is, Śākyamuni Buddha.

<sup>79</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), pp. 32, 29-p. 33, 1-7.

<sup>80</sup> Hurvitz (1976), p. 185.

<sup>81</sup> Kubo and Yayuma are following the Kasuga Edition of the *Lotus Sutra* as a basic text for their translation, rather than the Taishō Edition. Kubo and Yayuma (1993), p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> Kubo and Yayuma (1993), pp. 181-182.

<sup>83</sup> Watson (1993), pp. 172-173.

The way of reading most fits to a combination of schemes 3) and 4) as laid out above in II.A.2. Interestingly, the Dharmarakṣa translation and the Kumārajīva translation, though a little different in the order of the cardinal directions, do overlap in two prominent ways: 1) both put the Zenith and Nadir together at the end of the sequence. So these would most likely be the two Buddhas nos. 9 and 10 respectively in Fig. 4.6, especially since they are carved around the side of the boulder, making them a little removed from the main group. Further, 2) the overlap between the two texts also occurs with respect to the East and North directions, and the intermediate directions in both are simply mentioned as a single group without individually designated directional order. The only two directions that differ in order between them are the West and South: Dharmarakṣa translates the cardinal directions in the order of East, West, South, North; Kumārajīva translates them in the order of East, South, West and North.

Since the cardinal directions are each individually named in both texts and the intermediate directions are not, it seems the cardinal directions are given a certain prominence. Thus we can take the larger sized Buddhas in Group 18 as probably being the transformed Buddhas of the cardinal directions. Since the East direction was the initial one shown by Śākyamuni, it may be the largest Buddha among the large Buddhas, that is, no. 1 in Fig. 4.6. Since the last cardinal direction to be named in both texts is North, it is likely to be the smallest among the group of large sized Buddhas, that is, no. 4 in Fig. 4.6. (North is considered to be the most undesirous of all the cardinal directions). The problem comes to identifying nos. 2 and 3 Buddhas. If we follow the Dharmarakṣa text, no. 2 would be West and no. 3 would be South. If we follow the Kumārajīva text, no. 2 would be South and no. 3 would be West.

Two factors suggest it is the former (Dharmarakṣa's translation): 1) the text of Dharmarakṣa agrees more reasonably with the stylistic dating of Group 18 to ca. 385-ca. 400; and 2) the traditional East Asian manner of naming directions, which is customarily East, West and then South, North, as two orthogonal directional axes. That is, the East-West 東西 axis, then the South-North 南北 axis.<sup>84</sup> This is a yin-yang cosmological balancing, and it ends with the weakest direction, i.e., North. Furthermore, the East Buddha (no.1) appears to be slightly in front of no. 2, as if connected to, but larger than, no. 2.

If no.1 is the beginning point, and the Zenith and Nadir are nos. 9 and 10 around the corner of the boulder, then it follows that the four intermediate directions are the smaller seated Buddhas nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the Fig. 4.6 diagram. The whole of the ten-direction Buddhas have an order reading clockwise from the prominent East Buddha no.1, through the large Buddhas nos. 2, 3 and 4, then to the smaller intermediate directions, that are unspecified, nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8. These form the main group around the large standing Buddha figure of Śākyamuni, who is the origin of these ten-direction Buddhas. The Zenith and Nadir are included, but are separate around the corner, and rather than continuing the clockwise order, the Zenith is at the top and the Nadir is the smaller, lower, Buddha. All, however, are "transformations" of Śākyamuni and are not otherwise named in the text. They all appear grouped around the standing image of Śākyamuni as he is standing in the air in front of the stupa of Prabhūtaratna at the climatic moment of Chapter 11. The probable usage of the Dharmarakṣa translation of the *Lotus Sutra* with regard to the identity of the Group 18 configuration is interestingly confirmed by specific details occurring in the paintings of the East and North Walls of Cave 169, which will be discussed below when these walls are introduced.

<sup>84</sup> The order in Kumārajīva's translation, that is East, South, West and North is a uniformly circular order, without axes.



c. *Comment on the identity of the Group 18 configuration*

Some reasons why Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) may have been chosen by its makers to display in Group 18 on the upper part of the west (main) wall of Cave 169 could include the following:

- 1) That text offers a particularly marvelous display including a series of miraculous happenings up to the point of Śākyamuni opening the door of the stupa. It contains within it the narrative sequence of many types of marvelous happenings, one after the other to reach a climactic point. This gives it a dramatic intensity that could relate well with the viewers (monks and lay persons) in the cave and place them within an extended context of a marvelous drama.
- 2) It shows the great powers of not only Śākyamuni Buddha, but highlights the powers of the Bodhisattva and Buddha vows through the example of Prabhūtaratna, who is also part of the miraculous display as the chapter opens with the appearance of his stupa. This sets the stage for the main request at the end of the chapter when Śākyamuni asks for those present to vow to keep, teach, preserve, etc., the sutra, certainly one of the main points of this chapter and the one that involves a commitment by the fourfold assembly, presumably including the viewers and visitors to Cave 169.
- 3) This particular scene brings in prominently the ten-direction Buddhas, as represented by a single dhyānāsana Buddha for each of the ten directions. It is emphasized a number of times in the text that these ten-direction Buddhas are the “transformation forms” of Śākyamuni Buddha. Thus Śākyamuni’s status is tremendously magnified and is virtually equated with all Buddhas, a fundamental Mahāyāna point of view that is made clearly evident in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) and in this chapter.
- 4) Śākyamuni purifies the Sahā World in readiness to receive all his transformation Buddha bodies. So our impure world becomes, by the power of Śākyamuni, a pure land. All other beings are “removed to other Buddha lands” and the ground becomes lapis lazuli, level and even, the trees become the seven jewel trees, nets of jewels surround and spread over the land, precious incense burns and heavenly flowers are raining down, just like a pure land. Once it is ready, all the countless Śākyamuni Buddha transformations come from the ten-directions, each with an attendant, and take their place under a jewel tree on a jewel-adorned lion throne, all prepared for them by Śākyamuni.

The making of our world into a pure land is explicit and vivid. It is something that could readily appeal to the Chinese of that time, when the world was full of woe at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The fall of the Former Ch’in traumatized northern China after the battle of the River Fei in 383. The Ch’ang-an region did not become stabilized until the reign of Yao-hsing in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. There was little peace in Kansu until the stronger rulers consolidated territories under the Northern Liang and the Western Ch’in by ca. 420. A pure land on this earth would be a marvelous thought to the people of the Ping-ling ssu region (and elsewhere) ca. 385-400, the probable time of the beginning of the Buddhist imagery in Cave 169 and the making of the Group 18 configuration.

- 5) The scene depicted in Group 18 would probably indicate the height of climactic intensity of the text. So the building of the drama would have to be known or taught to the visitor. This drama in the text builds slowly and step-by-step and is riveting and compelling. By knowing the text, the visitors and viewers to Cave 169 could inject themselves into the scene, which tells them that the world has been made pure, that all the Buddhas of the ten-directions are present, and that through the transformative powers of Śākyamuni Buddha everything is happening. Not only that, he interacts



with another Buddha (other than his own emanations), a factor said in Hīnayāna texts not to be possible (only one Buddha can appear in our world at one time; there cannot be two Buddhas in the world at the same time), but clearly shown to be possible in this Mahāyāna text that expands horizons of possibilities infinitely. The anticipated interaction with Prabhūtaratna that is soon to occur, creates further interest. Then the resolution of opening the stupa, seeing the perfect Buddha, and Śākyamuni being invited to sit beside Prabhūtaratna in the stupa suggests a kind of resolution of many as one (all Buddhas of ten-directions as transformation bodies of Śākyamuni are present), as a resolution of two as one (that is, Śākyamuni as the same and together with Prabhūtaratna, both Buddhas sharing the same lion seat), as well as the affirmation or resolution of Mahāyāna going beyond Hīnayāna views.

- 6) The appearance of the ten-direction Buddhas collapses all space; the appearance of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna together seated on the lion throne collapses all time.
- 7) The end implies the importance of the vow and the expectation of the Buddha for beings to make the vow in front of himself, Prabhūtaratna and the transformation Buddhas of the ten-directions (implying all space and time), which would have to be an exceedingly powerful vow. This scene would suggest the coming of the time to make such a vow to those who knew the text of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*), such as monks and/or lay persons studying, meditating, or visiting Cave 169. This Group 18 relief would inspire such thinking and give the opportunity for the viewers to contemplate that action on their part.

### C. Conclusions of Dating and Iconography

As detailed above, the style of the images of Group 18 contains elements that relate to some in Kizil Caves 84, 38, 77 and 14 and is close to that of some of the sculptures of Tumshuk of the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and to a few wooden Buddhas of around the mid or latter half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century from Kizil and Tumshuk. Further, there is some indication of compatibility with such small bronze sculptures in China as the Ching-ch'uan Buddha from Kansu and the Nitta abhayā mudrā Buddha, the latter possibly from Shansi. The large standing Buddha of Group 18, probably Śākyamuni, is later than the Niche No. 1 Buddha, but it is not too far removed, because both use the stone core technique, which phases out after this early period (sometime around 400). Therefore we can judge the style of Group 18 to be ca. 385-400, early in the Western Ch'in.

Considering the iconography, the main large standing Buddha image is most likely Śākyamuni Buddha with the ten-direction Buddhas, probably reflecting a major moment in Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*), not when he is teaching, but when he rises in the air to open the door of the stupa of Prabhūtaratna, which had miraculously and suddenly appeared at the opening of the chapter. If so, this image could be a possible progenitor, or early example, of using the right arm lowered, a gesture used later in the T'ang period for Śākyamuni preaching on the Vulture Peak, as seen in some examples at the Tun-huang caves. It is possible that this gesture was current in the early period of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century for the same Śākyamuni on the Vulture Peak in the *Lotus Sutra*. Such a gesture, however, seems to have wider application in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, because it appears for Maitreya in the inscribed standing Buddha of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Fig. 4.10), and also appears on two of the three standing Buddhas in a number of three-figure Buddha configurations within Cave 169. Further, the same posture and gestures are seen in the colossal Buddha of Cave 18 at Yün-kang (discussed below in Chapter 8, see Fig. 8.53b, c), which is likely to be Vairocana Buddha. However, with respect to the Group 18 sculpture in Cave 169, it is unlikely to be Vairocana Buddha, since the

*Hua-yen Sutra* was not translated until 420 (revised by 422) and the *Gandhavyūha* chapter that had been translated by Sheng-chien 聖堅 around 400 in the Western Ch'in, does not have a scene comparable to the Group 18 configuration.<sup>85</sup> Considering all these factors, it is most plausible to conclude that the Group 18 configuration represents Śākyamuni and the ten-direction Buddhas, who are the miraculous transformations of Śākyamuni as expressly declared in Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra* at the time of the episode of the appearance of the stupa of Prabhūtaratna.

The Group 18 configuration is a very rare early surviving group of the ten-direction Buddhas in China, and even among known Buddhist art. I do not know of any other earlier example in China or in Central Asia. It also proclaims a clear Mahāyāna iconography and may be the earliest surviving sculptural group in China reasonably relatable directly with the *Lotus Sutra* text, probably directly to the Chapter 11 episode as explained above. Though it could relate to the Kumārajīva 406 A.D. translation, there are some specific indications that this sculptural ensemble is following the Dharmarakṣa 286 A.D. translation (particularly with the detail of the sitting position of Prabhūtaratna in the stupa, as will be discussed later in Chapters 5 and 7 below). In either case, it is prominently displayed all across the upper part of the main wall clearly proclaiming the Mahāyāna vision. Not before Yün-kang do we see such an explicit and vast concept executed in a grand manner as this ensemble on the upper part of the East Wall in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169.

It is possible that the now mostly missing wall paintings on the West Wall were paintings of small Buddhas. They could be the thousand Buddhas, or representations of the "myriad Buddhas" in the ten-directions, perhaps amplifying the sculptures of the ten-direction Buddhas in Group 18. According to the *Cheng fa-hua ching* text there were countless numbers of Buddhas coming from each direction. The function of the small standing Buddha a) and the small seated Buddha b) is not entirely clear (Fig. 4.6). However, Buddha a) might well belong to another configuration that was on the southern side of the West Wall. If not, then it could be simply a standing Buddha, possibly a Maitreya, which is inserted randomly, as a pertinent Buddha, but not necessarily part of the main narrative. The small seated Buddha b) is closer to the main group, located between Buddhas nos. 9 and 10 (Figs. 4.6 and 4.23). This could also be an inserted Buddha as one of the countless Buddhas of a direction, like the paintings may have been. It is smaller than any other image in the entire Group 18, and would seem to be extraneous to the major set of ten. It is frequently the case, certainly in later cave temples in China, such as Yün-kang and Lung-men, that random images are placed here and there between the main configuration of sculptures without detracting from the main iconographic scheme of the wall or entire cave.

Finally, considering the date of the Group 18 group of sculptures to ca. 385-400, this large ensemble of sculptures is probably one of the earliest renderings of the *Lotus Sutra* in Chinese art, and of the Chapter 11 episode, which in Chinese art later became the signature episode representing that popular sutra in China. It seems likely that the Group 18 example is an early attempt to represent Chapter 11, which later, certainly by the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century became consistently represented by the depiction

<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, the same pose and gestures occur also for the famous Kansu province miraculous colossal Buddha image of Liu Sa-ho. The foundations for the legend of this image reach back to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century and the monk Hui-t'a in the South. See Rhie (2002), p. 64-65, n. 110. Depictions of this famous image occur frequently in the wall paintings at Tun-huang, primarily as paintings in some of the T'ang period (618-906) and Five Dynasties period (906-960) caves, often appearing among sets of auspicious images. This miraculous image is usually referred to as the Buddha in Pan-ho county. For an example, see Cave 237 (mid-T'ang) and a large wall-sized painting (now mostly ruined) on the south wall in Cave 220 dated 440 A.D. and in Cave 72 of the Five Dynasties. See Ning Qiang, *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China*, Honolulu, 2004, chapter 2.

of the two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated side-by-side. Apparently the two Buddhas quickly superseded any other depiction for Chapter 11 in Chinese Buddhist art, and ultimately came to stand for the entire *Lotus Sutra*. The Group 18 sculptures are perhaps a truly rare survival of an early representation of Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra* prior to the later signature representation of the two Buddhas seated side-by-side.

### III. WEST WALL (LOWER PART)

The lower part of the west (rear) wall has suffered considerable damage and has lost much of the clay wall surfaces as well as major images. It includes Groups 17 and 16 (Fig. 4.24), which will be discussed here. Group 19, a thousand Buddha panel, seen at the far left in Fig. 4.26a, will be discussed in Chapter 7. The relative location of Groups 17 and 16 can be seen in Fig. 4.2.

#### A. Group 17: Triad with Surviving Standing Bodhisattva

Group 17, located below and slightly off-center towards the north with respect to the 4 meter standing Buddha of Group 18, is a large niche (H. 3.76 m [12.33 ft.]; W. 2.8 m [9.18 ft.]; Depth 1 m [3.28 ft.]). It originally contained one standing Buddha with two standing Bodhisattvas, but only the right attendant, standing, over life-size Bodhisattva (H. 2.43 m [7.9 ft.]) remains more or less intact (Figs. 4.25a, 4.26a). The two feet of the main standing Buddha remain, as well as some indication of his left standing Bodhisattva, and the worn out shapes of their semi-circular lotus pedestals (Figs. 4.24, 4.26a). The positioning of the Buddha's feet is similar to that of the Group 18 large standing Buddha, but the pedestal is larger and flatter (Figs. 4.7 and 4.26a). Directly in front of the Buddha's pedestal is a semicircular, raised, sloping, lumpy shape carved from the rock with a hole in the center near the front edge. This hole may have been for later repair, or to hold some wooden dowel to support some object, such as an incense burner. Some large and small holes in the wall were probably used for wooden dowels which originally would have held the clay backing, the mandorla(s) and images of this niche, which are not made of the stone core method as the Group 18 figures (Fig. 4.25). Instead, artificial walls were created to form a niche or the mandorlas of the images and the sculptures themselves were made with a core of bundled straw overlaid with clay and finished with a fine layer of stucco and then painted.

This configuration clearly appears to have been a triad of large proportions, with the Buddha probably about 10 or 11 feet high, thus of major importance on the main (rear) wall. Since it is closer to the floor level of the cave, it is likely to have been an important main image of this wall, but its relation to Group 18 above is not immediately apparent. Also there are remains of wall paintings of rows of small dhyānāsana Buddhas on the surface of the large triangular rock projection in the lower part of the center of this wall, which abuts and is a little higher than the right attendant Bodhisattva of Group 17 (Figs. 4.2 and 4.3). This is likely to accompany the Group 18 representation, which, as discussed above in sections II.B. and II.C, is probably from Chapter 11 of the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*). The artificial wall panel of 1,000 Buddhas (Group 19) that survives underneath the broken ledge of this triangular projection (Fig. 4.3), was probably added around the end of the Western Ch'in period of work in Cave 169. At the bottom of this triangular boulder there are some holes, possibly for supporting the surfaces for more wall paintings or for sculptures. A relative dating for the Group 17 triad can be obtained from a study of the surviving Bodhisattva.

### 1. *Description, Sources and Dating of the Standing Bodhisattva*

This large, nearly 8 ft. high standing Bodhisattva is made of clay with a core of bundled straw, as can be seen in the exposed part of the damaged left arm against the left side of the chest (Fig. 4.27), which reveals not only the straw, but also the coarse clay layer around the straw and the more refined outer layer. The Buddha and the other attendant Bodhisattva (now lost) show no remains of a stone inner core and were also probably made of the “straw bundle and clay method”, different from the stone core method of the Group 18 images and the Niche No. 1 Buddha.

Among the five remaining standing Bodhisattva sculptures in Cave 169 (two in Group 22, two in Group 6, and one in Group 3; Figs. 5.45, 5.53, 6.14b, 6.15b, 7.53a), the Group 17 Bodhisattva is different in many respects from the others and is probably the earliest. The body is tall and a little narrow with relatively thick shoulders and a tapered upper torso, but without any pronounced muscular definition (Figs. 4.26a, b). The limbs possess a stiff quality in their volumes, unlike the more subtly defined and flexible limbs of the other Bodhisattva sculptures in this cave. This imparts a slightly flatter, abstract appearance to the figure. There is an overall smoothness and simplicity, which is enhanced by the rather restrained linear definition of the clothing. The shape of the upper body has parallels with the figures in the wall paintings of Kizil Cave 83, both in the gently curved contour lines of the trunk and in the rounded limbs, though the Kizil painting shows more interest in the shaping of the muscles (Fig. 4.28). The smoothness of the Group 17 Bodhisattva sculpture is also relatable to the smooth shaping of the Cave 83 figures, which, as also noted earlier in respect to the Buddha of Group 18, were in Vol. II discussed as dating ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Group 17 Bodhisattva has some similarities with the form of the standing Bodhisattvas in the fragment of a wooden door jamb from Lou-lan site L.B.II discovered by Sven Hedin. These are rare Bodhisattva images of ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> (or early 4<sup>th</sup> century at the latest) from the Shan-shan kingdom (Fig. 4.29). Though the proportions and narrow body are similar in each, the Group 17 Bodhisattva reveals a slightly more extended torso, more rounding to the limbs and a little more movement in the arms. Compared with the bronze Maitreya Bodhisattva sculpture in the Ku-kung Museum of ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.3),<sup>86</sup> the body of the Group 17 Bodhisattva is more extended and the arms and legs are more independently rounded and positioned in a more open posture. Though the drapery formation in the bronze sculpture is related to earlier styles, it simplifies the Gandhāra mode even more than seen in the Fujii Yūrinkan Maitreya of ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>87</sup> The Group 17 Bodhisattva, however, presents a new model for the Bodhisattva image.

The dhoti, which fits the figure like thin, but stiff, silk—somewhat like the Niche No. 1 Buddha—has four widely spaced parallel U-shaped incised fold lines below the knees and long vertical incised pleat lines at the sides and between the legs (Figs. 4.26a, b). Over the thighs the drapery is totally plain, emphasizing the long oval shape of the leg without showing the shape of the knee joint, thereby drawing attention to the beauty of the smooth, convexly curved shape of the upper part of the leg. There is no rolled over band at the waist; instead there is a flat band with some horizontal, closely parallel, incised lines. A flat horizontal band is also created at the lower hem by one or two incised horizontally curving lines (Fig. 4.26b), somewhat reminiscent of the hem on the inner robe of the standing Buddha of Group 18 (Fig. 4.8), and vaguely related to the swept up hems of Gandhāran Bodhisattvas. The Group 17 Bodhisattva appears to wear an underskirt whose hem (or hems) shows below the hem of the dhoti (outer cloth). It is creased with a delicate, closely spaced, zigzag pleat pattern still visible in

<sup>86</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 318-322.

<sup>87</sup> Rhie (1999), Figs. 2.32a-g.

the remaining part at the image's right side (Figs. 4.26a, b). The dhoti has several long vertical pleats between the legs which end in some rather large pinch-pleat hem patterns (Fig. 4.26b).

The drapery design appears less developed for the scheme of dhoti folds than the designs used in the other standing Bodhisattvas of this cave, but it is certainly a design different from the model used by Fujii Yūrinkan Maitreya and the Ku-kung Maitreya bronze Bodhisattva sculptures. It does, however, appear related to the drapery forms seen in the attendant Bodhisattvas of the Ku-kung bronze altar in Fig. 4.30, dated in Vol. II to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Phase II). Though of small scale compared with the Group 17 Bodhisattva, the similarities are obvious in the straight legged stance and the U-shaped widely spaced folds on the legs, the vertical lines between the legs, and the flat scarves flaring outward at both sides. From these examples it would appear that this style of Bodhisattva was known in northern China in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It is quite likely that both the Hopei altar and the Group 17 Bodhisattva relate to artistic styles emanating from Ch'ang-an, of which, however, we have too few remains to be able to determine with any degree of certainty. Compared with the attendant Bodhisattvas of the Idemitsu Museum altar in Fig. 1.1p, dated in Vol. II to early Phase III (early 5<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>88</sup> the altar Bodhisattvas show some differences, notably in the lifted upper torso and in the stronger, more three-dimensional, wedge-like creases of the dhoti over the legs, though they are still in a loose U-shape and the scarves fall vertically at the sides. The Group 17 Bodhisattva has the closest similarity with the Ku-kung altar in Fig. 4.30 and at the same time it is possible to see the relation with the Lou-lan wooden jamb Bodhisattvas and the bronze Ku-kung Maitreya, though the stylistic links with the latter are somewhat weak. The analysis of these factors so far points to a dating for the Group 17 Bodhisattva probably in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The scarf clings closely to the body and lies flat diagonally across the front with a large loose twist near the right knee (Figs. 4.26a, b). On the image's right side it appears to be held by the now mostly missing right hand. On the image's left side the scarf seems to be held up by the raised left hand, and the broad, flat drape of the scarf flares outward and down the image's left side, forming a flat plane with at least five closely spaced, parallel, incised lines. The whole scarf is marked with shallow, parallel, incised lines and it has some red color remains. The scarf, which presumably crosses the back behind the shoulders, though this is not entirely clear, is not symmetrically arranged. A major portion is held in front of the body by the two hands. This is different from the wearing of the scarf in both the Lou-lan Bodhisattvas and in the Ku-kung Maitreya (Figs. 4.29, 4.30), though the latter seems to have some of the narrow parallel spacing of incised lines as seen also in the Group 17 Bodhisattva. In both cases, the narrowly spaced incised lines has some resemblance to the delicate incised lines used as filling in the Nitta abhayā mudrā seated Buddha in Fig. 4.19, dated in Vol. II to Phase II, ca. 375. These parallel lines are also similar to the linear technique seen in the kneeling worshipping figures from small Temple "I" at Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk (Fig. 4.31), of ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The flat scarf and the holding of the scarf in front of the body resembles the scarf depictions in the wall paintings of Kizil Cave 84, which has numerous examples (Fig. 4.11), including those with the flat scarf only over one shoulder in an asymmetrical pattern similar to the asymmetry of the Group 17 Bodhisattva (though it is not possible to determine if the scarf of the Group 17 Bodhisattva crosses over the shoulder). Such frontal modes and one-shoulder modes for wearing the scarf can also be seen in Kizil Caves 83 (Fig. 4.28) and 38 (Fig. 3.20a) and is very clearly represented in the scarf worn by the

<sup>88</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 420-422.



female standing figure in Kizil Cave 7 (Fig. 4.32). From these it would seem that it was one fashion around the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and up to the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Kizil.<sup>89</sup>

The Group 17 Bodhisattva has a full face with a strong and rounded jaw (Figs. 4.27, 4.33). The eyebrows are thin and arched like those of the Niche No.1 Buddha, though not as pronounced, and they have an incised line on the lower edge. The eyes are almond-shaped, widely open and without deep upper lids. The upper eyelid is smooth, without the crease which is characteristic of some early images, such as seen in the Ku-kung bronze Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 2.3) or the Western type of eyelid as seen in most small bronze Buddha images of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In the Group 17 Bodhisattva the eye is portrayed in the East Asian rather than the Western mode; this may well be among the earliest surviving examples of this change. This certainly does not mean that the “Western” type of eye ceased entirely to be used, but it is one further step in the sinicization of Buddhist art in China. The nose is shapely and strong and the mouth is full, slightly smiling and boldly contoured with sensitive fluctuations. All of the features of this face appear to be original without any repair. The large and solid appearance of the head may relate to the style of head represented by the main figure from the Tökhungri tomb dated 408 near Pyongyang in North Korea (Fig. 4.34) and to the Asian Art Museum bronze standing Kuanyin Bodhisattva of ca. 400 (Fig. 4.35). The latter image is stylistically very close to the Group 17 Bodhisattva, though it has a little more sense of massive volume.

Sharp, clear, closely spaced, curved parallel incised lines indicate the hair strands on the head and triangularly shaped *jaṭāmukuta* (“crown of hair”) of the Group 17 Bodhisattva. The technique appears somewhat similar to that used for the hair on the cranium of the bronze Kharoṣṭhi inscription seated bronze Buddha found in Sian (Fig. 2.4) of ca. 375, on the Niche No. 1 Buddha (Fig. 3.10), and is also known in the stone sculptures from Airtam of ca. mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>90</sup> A narrow double fillet binds the hair like a simple crown just above the “V” of the part. Wide, beautifully pleated ends spread from the back of this fillet. Those on the image’s right side are amazingly still preserved (Figs. 4.26a, b and 4.27). The particular pleat design used here is uncannily similar to the folds used in the Eastern Great Buddha at Bāmiyān for the folds of the under robe, visible under the raised right arm of the Buddha (Fig. 4.36). Although one may think this is a common motif, it is actually not readily seen elsewhere in this particular style with crisp, small and crinkled edges and a groove in the center of the pleat. The occurrence of this motif in the Group 17 Bodhisattva is yet another example of the Bāmiyān and Ping-ling ssu relation which contributes towards dating the Eastern Great Buddha to ca. 4th century. The closest comparable example from Central Asia may be the crown ribbons of the Maitreya of Kizil Cave 38 (Figs. 3.20a, b). Though the ribbons of the Cave 38 image are not as wide as those of the Group 17 Bodhisattva, they have beautiful folding patterns which are possibly earlier versions of the more regularized patterns of the Group 17 Bodhisattva’s crown. A later version of this style of crown ribbons appears in the stone cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva probably dating around ca. 430.<sup>91</sup>

The hair is twisted into a long curl behind the ears (Figs. 4.26b, 4.27, 4.33). This curl is bound near the shoulder, allowing the thick, long, individual clusters of hair to fall loosely over the shoulders and onto the chest. This style of coiffure is not seen in the other Bodhisattvas in this cave and is different from the long, narrow ringlets of the Ku-kung Museum bronze Bodhisattva (Fig. 2.3). It does,

<sup>89</sup> It can also be seen in the early wall paintings of Toyuk, in Turfan, which will be discussed in a subsequent volume of this series.

<sup>90</sup> Rhie (1999), fig. 3.8.

<sup>91</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.95.



however, seem related to the hair style of a stone goddess figure from Brar in Kashmir discussed in Volume II, although the Cave 169 image is more simply portrayed and marked with diagonal incised lines.<sup>92</sup> The long hair in the other Bodhisattva images in Cave 169 (the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva and the attendant Bodhisattvas of Groups 22, 6, and 3) is different in that it falls loosely over the back and behind the edge of the scarf in a manner similar to the hair of the Asian Art Museum standing Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.35. We will meet with images in the 5th century which have a similar hair mode as this Group 17 Bodhisattva (including some from Mai-chi shan, others from Kansu, and the group of bronze Maitreya Bodhisattvas dating ca. 430's discussed in Volume II),<sup>93</sup> but this Group 17 Bodhisattva appears to be an early example.

The earrings of the Group 17 Bodhisattva are the long tassel type, which look like cylinders with incised line designs (Fig. 4.33). This is a type of earring common to India in the Mathurā Kushana school. Bodhisattvas in Cave 169 Group 6 (dated 424) and Group 3, also wear this kind, but none are as detailed as those of the Group 17 Bodhisattva. Due to the damaged condition of the chest, it is not clear what kind of necklace the image had.

A portion of the circular head halo remains on the wall below the pleated crown ribbons on the image's right side (fig. 4.27). It is composed of relatively narrow circular concentric bands. The outer one is brick red, followed by a light color (green?) and another red band. Narrow bands are seen in the head halos of the paintings of Kizil Cave 38 (Fig. 3.20a). The Group 17 Bodhisattva does not appear to have had a body halo or mandorla (either painted or sculpted). The pedestal is low and has lost most of its surface definition. It is relatively wide and the pod on which the image stands is shallow, wide and flat (Fig. 4.26a).

Overall, this Bodhisattva appears to be among the earliest images in the cave and the earliest Bodhisattva image. It relates to the images of Group 18 in the shaping of the body, but is different in the technique of make. Elements seem to connect to styles in the early caves at Kizil, notably Caves 84, 83 and 38, and to some of the small bronze images of ca. 375, such as the Ku-kung altar (Fig. 4.30) and the Nitta abhayā mudrā Buddha (Fig. 4.19). These indicators point to a dating probably slightly later than Group 18, but not much later, and probably still within the ca. 385-ca. 400 period. As a major, large triad configuration, this niche is an important early remains, stylistically earlier than the Cave 169 triad of the seated Buddha Amitāyus niche with the Chien-hung date of 424 or 420 A.D.

## 2. Iconographic Considerations and Conclusions

The evidences to assess the possible iconography for the Group 17 configuration are slim because of its ruined condition. However, it can be said that it was a triad consisting of a standing Buddha and two standing attendant Bodhisattvas. This may well be the earliest remains of a standing Buddha triad from China. Another appears in Cave 169 Group 22, but it is a little later in date (see Chapter 5). Since the Group 18 configuration above appears to relate to the *Cheng-fa-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*), it is possible that this triad is also connected to the *Lotus Sutra*. In that case, the Buddha would probably be Śākyamuni, perhaps with Bodhisattvas such as Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, Mahāpratiḥhāna, Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin) and Samantabhadra (P'u-hsien), who are among the Bodhisattvas importantly appearing in the *Lotus Sutra*. Since the Buddha of the Group 17 triad was standing and not seated, it is not likely

<sup>92</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.96.

<sup>93</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.95, 2.97a, b.

to be in an actual teaching scene. Triads with standing Buddhas in later Chinese art frequently show the standing Buddha in an abhayā mudrā or vitarka mudrā with the right hand.<sup>94</sup> If we take the hand positions of the Group 17 Buddha to have been like those of the standing Buddha of the Group 22 triad on the South wall (Fig. 5.45), then the hand positions would also be like those of the Group 18 large standing Buddha, which as discussed above is part of the Chapter 11 scene not specifically related to teaching, but to revealing the Buddha Prabhūtaratna.

A triad consisting of a standing Buddha and two standing Bodhisattvas is quite rare anywhere in Buddhist art before ca. 400 A.D., even in India, Gandhāra or Central Asia. Fig. 4.37, a stone relief fragment from Gandhāra, is one possible example. It shows a standing Buddha in the abhayā mudrā with the right hand and the left hand lowered and probably holding the hem of his robe. He is attended in the arched setting by two standing Bodhisattvas, both of which hold a lotus in the right hand. Despite the fact that this relief is a fragment and may have been part of a longer relief frieze, it is of some interest as an example of what appears to be a standing Buddha triad with two attendant Bodhisattvas from the Gandhāra region dating around 250-350. Its style is similar to the important platform relief from Takht-i-Bāhi datable to ca. 250-350 (Fig. 3.14b) and noted earlier in relation to the Niche No. 1 Buddha at Ping-ling ssu. This relief is discussed in detail below in Chapter 8. Usually standing Buddhas prior to ca. 400 A.D. in India, Gandhāra, and Haḍḍa are single images, often part of a narrative scene (when in relief), or as part of a series or set of standing Buddhas (such as the seven Buddhas or the three Buddhas) in both reliefs and as free-standing images.<sup>95</sup> The rarity of the standing Buddha triad with two attendant Bodhisattvas before ca. 400 makes this Group 17 triad more important as an early representation of that form, doubtless of Mahāyāna iconography. The main Buddha is monumental in size, so it would have been very impressive and important. It is possible that some of the figures below from Group 16 belong with the triad niche, making it a more elaborate ensemble, a factor which will be considered further in the conclusions to this chapter.

### B. Group 16

Group 16 consists of three different groupings: 1) a group of five dhyānāsana Buddhas sitting in a row, 2) a “contemplative” Bodhisattva, and 3) two standing Buddhas, probably originally belonging to a set of three Buddhas, which are likely to be the Buddhas of the Three Ages (Past, Present, and Future), also referred to as the Three World Buddhas. It is not certain if they were originally meant to be part of one ensemble or to have any connection with Groups 17 and 18, but these possibilities will be considered. Each one of these three groupings is a rare and important iconographic type, a factor which will receive considerable attention in this book.

<sup>94</sup> A large stone stele in the Gardner Museum in Boston with an inscription dating it to the Eastern Wei, 543 A.D., and identifying the main image as “Śākyamuni” (also mentioning the “two Bodhisattvas” and two monks “Ānanda and Kāśyapa”), can probably be associated with the *Lotus Sutra*. There is a large scene of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna on the back of the stele. Though some of the figures on the stele are specifically identified, the two main Bodhisattvas are not named other than as “two Bodhisattvas.” Y. Horioka, M. Rhie and W. Denny, *Oriental and Islamic Art in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum*, Boston, 1975, No. 5, pp. 15-22.

<sup>95</sup> There are seated Buddha triads commonly known among the earliest Buddha images of Kushana period art of Mathurā, and in the Gandhāran stone and stucco images (especially of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries), and in the stucco imagery from Haḍḍa. In these triads the Buddhas are generally in the abhayā or dharmachakra (teaching) mudrā. The iconography of the triad in the Buddhist art of India, Gandhāra and Haḍḍa is little understood at present. It is a difficult and complicated problem, and it is clear that there are major changes during the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### 1. *Group 16: Five Dhyānāsna Buddhas*

Just below the large ruined niche containing the Group 17 triad, there is a ledge consisting of a long, shallow rectangular niche containing a row of five seated dhyānāsana Buddhas (H. of each about 50 cm [19.68 in.]) (Figs. 4.24 and 4.38). These five seated Buddhas are approximately centered with respect to the standing Buddha in the triad above (Group 17) and appear to be intentionally related to that configuration. It is quite clear that they compose a discrete group, since they are made of stone core and there are no other images of this kind nearby. That is, this would not seem to be part of a longer row of images (such as 7 or 10 Buddhas) extending to the south around to the base of the large triangular rock and below the 1,000 Buddha panel (Fig. 4.2). On the north side the adjacent space is filled with the Contemplative Bodhisattva, which, however, is positioned a little higher (Fig. 4.24). The rectangular niche seems to have been made especially for this group of five, which were originally carved as stone core images from the living rock. Between the central image and the next image to the right there has been carved out a large square-shaped hole, possibly for a wooden post (Fig. 4.38), but its function is not clear. From the view of all five Buddhas in Fig. 4.25a it appears that originally each had a halo perhaps partially built up as a screen backing. Part of the halo of the Buddha at the far right (facing) can still be seen (Fig. 4.38). Its two outer rims are separated by a pearl pattern and the outermost rim is green color. In possibly combining the technique of the stone inner base with the usage of a small wall screen for the halos, this group of five Buddhas appears to be a transitional group between the stone core images and the bundled straw and clay images. The clay screen backing of the five Buddhas was connected to the figure of the Contemplative Bodhisattva of Group 16 and may have projected to a certain degree in front of the large niche (Group 17) with the large triad. One thing is definite; there were no more than five in this group of dhyānāsna Buddhas, so the group of five is significant in its own right.

This group of five seated Buddhas are of slightly varying sizes, a condition somewhat emphasized due to the ruined state of some. The Buddha at the far right (facing) is the largest and the one at the far left (facing) is the smallest (Fig. 4.25a). This imparts the suggestion that they are distinguished by size. On most only the stone core carving still remains, though some of the heads are ruined and the lower portions are considerably worn out. They probably were all wearing robes with both shoulders covered, but this is not clear. The clay covering with polychrome is gone except for the heads of two, which are relatively well preserved (Fig. 4.38). These heads can be easily discerned as stylistically similar to the heads of the two standing Buddhas in Group 16 (Fig. 4.49), which, as discussed below, have some later (but not much later) restoration. These five Buddhas may also have received some clay surface and paint repair at the same time as these two standing Buddhas of Group 16.

These five stone core dhyānāsana Buddhas are somewhat less elegantly proportioned than the stone core images of Group 18 (Fig. 4.23), and the hand gestures are not so visibly aligned on edge. Some may even have had the cloth covering over the hands. The large heads and rather abbreviated shape of the bodies is probably mainly a factor of their relatively small size, but similar proportions and simple shaping can also be seen in four small dhyānāsana Buddhas on a bronze incense burner from the Eastern Chin in the South (Fig. 4.39). This does not necessarily constitute any comparative relationship in this case, since this is probably a rather pervasive manner of portrayal for small images. However, since it is rare to see any Buddhist objects at all surviving from the South, any relation, even if minor or remote, has a certain interest.

The meaning of five seated dhyānāsana Buddhas in this location is an interesting question. They might, as noted by Teng Yü-hsiang, refer to the Buddhas of the five directions: the four cardinal directions and the center. In this respect it is also of interest to note that the small dhyānāsana Buddhas on the incense burner from the Eastern Chin in Fig. 4.39 has the images positioned at the four quadrants, possibly suggesting at least the four directional axes.<sup>96</sup> However, as will be shown below in Chapter 8, it appears that many of the early Mahāyāna sutras translated into Chinese prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> century (that I have so far checked) do not mention a group of five direction Buddhas, even though there are numerous citations to the four, six, eight and ten-direction Buddhas. So this is not likely to be the pertinent identification of this set of five Buddhas.

As discussed in Volume II, there is the famous set of “five Buddhas” made by Tai K’uei (died 392/393 or 395/396) in the late 4th century for the Wa-kuan ssu 瓦官寺 in Chien-k’ang 建康, capital of the Eastern Chin 東晉 (317-420 A.D.) in the South. These famous images are known from brief citation in literary records.<sup>97</sup> These records, however, are significant, as they document a major group of images by a famous artist for the most prestigious temple in the Eastern Chin capital at the time. Although these records provide no specific identification other than “five Buddhas,” they do relate that these sculptures were made of lacquer, were “portable”, and “they were mutually excellent and without compare and continuously emitted body [supernatural] light”.<sup>98</sup>

The iconography of five Buddhas is a major iconographic topic that has not yet been studied in regard to the appearances of five Buddhas in China or in the India, Gandhāra, Afghanistan and Central Asian regions in the early periods, especially 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Chapter 8 in this volume will be entirely devoted to a detailed study of this iconographic set of Buddhas studied with respect to the art of those regions and its relation with the early Buddhist art of China. This important iconographic subject acquires major significance in connection with Cave 169, which has a least two, but probably four, examples of the five Buddha set (sculptures of Groups 16, 23, 20, and part of the paintings of Group 12). Because of that, we will begin our later, more extensive, study of this topic here with the Cave 169 examples, the first being the Group 16 set of five Buddhas.

The five dhyānāsana Buddhas of Group 16, being stone core, are probably an early group by virtue of the technique. Nevertheless, they were probably carved around the time of the Group 17 images, which are not stone core, but have been discussed above as being early, within the ca. 385-400 period. A date of ca. 400 A.D. for the set of five stone core Buddhas of Group 16 would likely be commensurate with the making of the stone core sculptures of Group 18, which in turn is probably followed shortly by Group 17 and the five Buddhas of Group 16. It is likely that the five Buddhas are related iconographically to the Group 17 triad, perhaps in much the same way as a row Buddhas are seen in the base of some stone sculptures of Gandhāra of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century. One especially important case in point is the relief of five seated Buddhas from the image platform of “shrine d” in Court XIV at the monastery of Takht-i-Bāhī (Fig. 8.22c). This shrine, as detailed in Chapter 8 (section III.B.3.), is reasonably

<sup>96</sup> This bronze incense burner was collected at Chü-jung hsien 句容縣 in Kiangsu 江蘇 in 1974. It has a circular plate-like base with raised sides. In the center is a recumbent animal from the back of which a tube projects that lifts up the globular incense burner. The lower portion is like a bowl with an everted rim on which four dhyānāsana Buddhas are placed at equidistant positions, along with three flying birds. The reticulated cover, which pulls back on a hinge, is in the form of entwined dragons. Four birds are perched around the cover. At the top there is what appears to be the remains of a handle, but it is not mentioned in the text. Though there is some breakage, there does not appear to have been another Buddha figure. Ho Yün-ao, *et al*, *Fo-chiao ch’u-ch’uan nan fang chih lu*, Beijing, 1993, No. 31 on p. 166.

<sup>97</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 94-96.

<sup>98</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 95-97.

datable to ca. 250-350 A.D. and affords confirmation of the usage of a set of five Buddhas in the art of the Peshawar region of Gandhāra by that time.

## 2. Group 16: Seated Bodhisattva with One Leg Pendant

At the lower right side (facing) of the triad niche Group 17 and the row of five Buddhas in Group 16, is the remains of a relatively small Bodhisattva (H. 63cm [24.8 in.]) seated on a stool in the pose of one leg pedant and the other bent up and resting on the thigh of the pedant leg—a posture usually related to the so-called Contemplative Bodhisattva (ssu-wei 思惟) and frequently further designated by the term pan-chia 半跏 (“panga” in Korea and “hanka” in Japanese) which literally means “half cross-legged”, but which we interpret as “one leg pendant” in order to be more descriptively meaningful (Figs. 4.24, 4.40). The identity of the so-called Contemplative Bodhisattva is the subject of many studies, especially centering around determining whether the ssu-wei image in China represents Siddhārtha in his first contemplation, or represents the Bodhisattva Maitreya.<sup>99</sup> The iconographic issues of this particular form of image will be discussed more below in Chapter 9 with the Mai-chi shan caves and later in Volume IV in relation to the Northern Liang stone stupas. Here, this Group 16 image will be provisionally called a Ssu-wei or Contemplative Bodhisattva.

It is possible that this Contemplative image had a counterpart of some sort on the opposite side of the large niche (between the standing Bodhisattva of Group 17 and Group 19—the wall of 1,000 Buddhas), as suggested by Chang Pao-hsi (Fig. 4.26a).<sup>100</sup> If so, it could have been another Contemplative Bodhisattva (similar to the pair on the entrance wall of Cave 38 at Kizil)<sup>101</sup> or a cross-ankled Bodhisattva usually identifiable as Maitreya Bodhisattva. In the mirrors from the South discussed in Vol. II as dating to the early or mid Eastern Chin (that is, ca. 317-396),<sup>102</sup> the Contemplative Bodhisattva was paired with what appears to have been a seated Buddha or Bodhisattva in padmāsana (Fig. 3.23).

The body of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva is bent slightly towards the image’s left, but the whole image is turned toward the Group 17 triad, which seems to indicate that it was an image attending that triad (Fig. 4.48). Both forearms are broken off and part of the raised left leg is damaged, exposing the straw and clay technique used for this image (Fig. 4.40). The pendant right leg is mostly intact, including the bare foot. The left arm may have been bent upwards towards the cheek in the typical contemplative posture and the right hand may have been in the abhaya mudrā, but neither is certain, and the left arm may have had some repair. The posture could have been similar to that of the Bodhisattva (possibly Maitreya in Tūṣita Heaven) in the right wall lunette of Kizil Cave 118 (Fig. 4.42) dated in Vol. II to early 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>103</sup> or to the posture of the king in Kizil Cave 83 (Fig. 4.43) also of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. It could also have been similar to the painting of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva in the

<sup>99</sup> The iconography of this Bodhisattva is still controversial. Junghee Lee has identified them as primarily the Prince Siddārtha in his First Meditation with regard to ssu-wei images in China. Junghee Lee, “The Origins and Development of the Pensive Bodhisattva Images of Asia,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. LIII, ¾, (1993), pp. 317-32. Here she includes the important example from the Stupa of Pai dated 434 A.D. from Chiu-ch’üan in western Kansu, the Cave 169 Group 16 ssu-wei image, and the example from Cave 74 at Mai-chi shan. The importance of the Contemplative Bodhisattva in this period seems to reside in its identification with the “beginning” of Siddhārtha’s enlightenment process.

<sup>100</sup> Chang Pao-hsi suggests that there must have been a small cross-ankled Bodhisattva on the opposite (left) side. Chang Pao-hsi, “Heirinji no seishin kutsu,” *Heirinji sekkutsu* (Ping-ling ssu stone caves), in *Chūgoku sekkutsu*, Tokyo, 1986, p. 200.

<sup>101</sup> *Kijiru sekkutsu* (Kizil Stone Caves), in *Chūgoku sekkutsu*, Vol. I, Tokyo, 1983, color pls. 87-88.

<sup>102</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 185, especially noting the Kyoto National Museum mirror from the Kongōrinji.

<sup>103</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 655-658, 719.



Cave 169 Group 12 North wall painting of the Vimlakīrtinirdeśa (Fig. 7.33), dating ca. 425, though that image does not sit on a stool seat with a cloth back as is the case with the Group 16 sculpture. There are numerous examples of Bodhisattvas in a pose related to that seen in the Group 16 Bodhisattva. The example in Fig. 4.44 from Gandhāra, has elements that are quite close to the Group 16 image. This Gandhāran example is most likely to be Avalokitesvara holding a lotus in the left hand.<sup>104</sup>

The face of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva is round and full with fairly small features (Figs. 4.40, 4.41). It appears very similar to the shaping of the small head on the wooden Buddha from Tumshuk-Tagh in Fig. 4.17, with its heart-shaped face, pointed chin and small features. The lower lid of the eye of the Group 16 Bodhisattva has more definition than the eye form of the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.27, 4.33), and generally there is a softer definition of the planes in the Contemplative Bodhisattva. The hair has a V notch in the part and spreads out loosely behind the head in a style different from the hair of the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.27). This would indicate at least a different artist at work, if not also possibly a difference in rank of the image and/or in time between these two images. Other features, such as the little round earrings and twisted rolled belt of the dhōti are also different from the depiction of these features in the larger standing Bodhisattva of Group 17. The necklace of the Contemplative Bodhisattva is wide and flat with a raised rim along the top edge. A similar one appears on the Bodhisattva of Group 22 (Fig. 5.53), which, as will be seen below, in many ways combines features of the Group 17 Bodhisattva and this Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva. Also, the Asian Art Museum Bodhisattva of ca. 400 (Fig. 4.35), has a large flat type necklace, but it has a pointed bottom rather than being circular. The twisting scarves, though somewhat related to the looped twist of the scarf of the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva, appears to herald a different style, one which is carried on in other Bodhisattva images in Cave 169, notably those of Groups 22, 6, and 3 (Figs. 5.53, 6.14b, 6.15b, 7.53a). The stand-up flat circular shaping of the scarf behind the image's back is a mode known in the Kizil Cave 118 paintings (Fig. 4.42) and in the Asian Art Museum Bodhisattva of ca. 400 (Fig. 4.35), though the latter has more volume to the depiction. An early form of this manner of portrayal with the flat, semicircular shape of the scarf being predominate appears in the cross-ankled Bodhisattva from Kizil Cave 76, independently dated in Vol. II to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.45a).<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Akira Miyaji has done a study of "pan-chia ssu-wei" type of Bodhisattva in Gandhāran art. He notes that the beginnings of this form did not appear with any definite image and that there is a difference between the contemplative half-pendant legged (pan-chia ssu-wei) pose and the *lalitasana* (pose of royal ease with one leg drawn up onto the top of the throne or seat), which is reserved for kings and gods in Indian art. However, this ssu-wei image distinctly has a component of deep thinking, so the pose is different. He classifies the pan-chia ssu wei type image in Gandhāran art into four categories: 1) those in narrative scenes involving Siddhārtha, including the first contemplation, marriage, renunciation and, in some cases the enlightenment scene where the pose is not for Siddhārtha but is specifically used for a figure believed to be Māra; 2) in the so-called "Great Miracle of Srāvastī" type large reliefs where many in the "sacred crowd" assembled have that pose as well as apparently special Bodhisattvas who appear in separate shrines and sometimes in pairs with another pan-chia ssu-wei image or with a cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya); 3) the pan-chia ssu-wei in Buddha triads where the Buddha is seated on a lotus in the dharmachakra mudrā and is flanked by a pair of ssu-wei images, which can hold varying implements, such as a book, lotus bud or flower wreath, or flanked by a combination of ssu-wei and cross-ankled Bodhisattvas; and 4) for independent images, most of which have a crown and hold a lotus, suggesting they are Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin) Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, a form that seems to have been formalized in the later periods of Gandhāran art, from 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries. A. Miyaji, *Nehan to Miroku no zuzōgaku: Indo kara Chūō Ajia e*, Tokyo, 1992, chapter 4.

<sup>105</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 695-696.



The folds of the dhoti are indicated by incised groove-like lines that are quite strong and not as delicate as those in the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva. They form vertical parallel lines over the thighs and U-shaped lines on the lower legs. The drape that falls from under the raised left leg forms a symmetric, ruffled cascade of three semi-circular hems that decrease in size towards the bottom, which tapers to two points. These semi-circular hem patterns are scored with vertical incised lines, as are the more broadly depicted wavy hems in the lower part of the scarf that still remains on the image's left side (the lower portion of the right side scarf is lost, but it clearly projected outward away from the image and the image's seat). The wavy hem with vertical scoring is a feature of some persistence in Sixteen Kingdoms period imagery. An early form of it can be seen in the torso from Temple "I" at Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk, dated in Vol. II to ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.45b), both in the folds between the legs and in the folds of the drape over the left thigh. Both appear to be an earlier form of the wavy hem patterns seen on the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva. In particular, the drape from under the left leg of the Contemplative Bodhisattva is very similar to the patterning of the end portion of the drape over Temple "I" image's left thigh. Furthermore, the Temple "I" image also has a rolled waist band.

The pattern of loosely open, wavy hems in the ends of the scarf as seen in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva is of continuous interest in assessing the images of the Sixteen Kingdoms period, as it is an important ingredient in the depiction of Bodhisattva images of this time. Prototypes of the particular mode seen in this contemplative image are not obvious in the earlier Bodhisattva images from China, but can be seen in the trend of images from India of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, such as the standing Buddha from Sarnath in Fig. 4.46, where the broad S-curve sweep of the hem of the garment hanging from the Buddha's left hand has similar shaping. In the hem of the seated Buddha from Mathurā in Fig. 4.47 the hems from the raised left arm have vertical, incised, parallel scores indicating pleats similar to the parallel scores found in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva, though the hem patterns themselves are tight and small, similar to those seen in the hems of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription bronze Buddha from Ch'ang-an of ca. 360's or 370's (Fig. 2.4). This pattern type also persists in the later Cave 169 Bodhisattvas.

The Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva also has a flat vertical rim-like band as the dhoti falls along the outer side of the right leg, and this band continues as a kind of curved hem roll or border over the front of the leg and partly up the inner side of the leg (Fig. 4.40). This hem roll acts like a frame around the lower part of the leg. This motif appears in a number of images from the Northern Silk Road sites in Central Asia, such as on the seated Buddha from Duldul Akur (Fig. 2.18) in Kucha, the seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya from Kizil Cave 76 (Fig. 4.45a), and others. It appears to be a pervasive feature in some drapery depictions of this period, and we will have occasion to make note of this feature in other cases. For example, it appears in more definite form in the Group 22 Bodhisattva discussed below (Fig. 5.53). The usage in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva is less definite than in the Group 22 Bodhisattva, but has more prominence than this motif as it is used in the hems of the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.26a, b) and the Group 18 standing Buddha (Figs. 4.7, 4.8).

The Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva sits on a generously large, cloth-covered "rattan" stool. Its covering is marked by quite widely spaced, parallel, incised lines and is bound by a wide band midway between the rim and the base (Fig. 4.40). Behind the image is painted a round head halo of three plain bands; one red and two (malachite) green, separated and bounded by a thin white line. The bands are proportionately a little wider than those used in the head halo of the Group 17 Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.27). The head halo, comprised of equal sized circular bands, is similar to many of the head halos

of Kizil Caves 118, 83, 84 (all early 4<sup>th</sup> century) and Cave 38, which was dated in Vol. II to ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 4.42, 4.11, 4.43, 3.20a).<sup>106</sup> The use of white lines to separate the halo bands is used in the paintings of Kizil Cave 38 and others.

Behind the Contemplative Bodhisattva is also painted a decorative cloth as though draped over the back of the seat. The round head halo is painted as overlapping in front of the cloth. The cloth has a trapezoid shape with slanted edges in front and shows the corners and underside of the cloth as it would appear after falling over the top edge of a horizontal throne back. This motif of the cloth decorating the throne back is known in the art of Central Asia and appears in Kizil Cave 83 (behind the prince) in Fig. 4.43. It also appears in the example of the stone seated Bodhisattva from Gandhāra in Fig. 4.44, which sits on a rattan stool, has the cloth covered back and a circular head halo in similar combination as seen in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva. This Gandhāran Bodhisattva, now in the Matsumoto Museum in Tokyo, has the right leg resting on top of the thigh of the pendant left leg, raises the right hand towards his head, and holds a lotus flower in his relaxed left hand. The lotus flower would seem to identify the Bodhisattva as Avalokiteśvara. The cloth backing may be an element derived from Persian sources where it was a motif used for the decoration of a ruler's seat. Its usage here could suggest a princely figure (such as Siddhārtha), or to represent Maitreya as seen in the Kizil Cave 118 painting. Its usage in most of the stone stupas of Liang chou (Kansu) occurs with the cross-ankled Bodhisattva, who is Maitreya. However, in the Stupa of Pai dated 434 it is used for both the Contemplative Bodhisattva, who is identifiable in this stupa as Siddhārtha, as well as the cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya.<sup>107</sup>

The cloth for the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva is decorated with a border design of large gems (pearls with a central dot in solid red) between a double-lined rim. The interior space is filled with a simplified peacock feather design (called fish-scale design by the Chinese). Many of the feather designs still have a green color (alternating with white) for the circular eye. Some paint remains of a white band at the seat level to left and right may be part of this throne back, but it is not clear. Red is used for the background color of the wall surface in general.

The Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva seems to certainly date later than the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva and is certainly by a different artist. Nevertheless, it seems to belong to the larger configuration of the lower wall as part of a single unit, and probably also dates within the ca. 385-400 period, or slightly later. Except for the Contemplative Bodhisattvas known in the bronze mirrors from the south (Fig. 3.23), this Bodhisattva is one of the earliest sculpted forms of the Contemplative type Bodhisattva in China. Others appear on the Northern Liang stone stupas of the 420s and 430s and in the early caves at Mai-chi shan and Chin-t'ā ssu stone caves, both in Kansu. However, the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva appears to date earlier than any of these other examples from Kansu. It then becomes the earliest known major example of the Contemplative Bodhisattva remaining in Chinese Buddhist art, though its exact identity is still not clear.

### 3. Group 16: Two (of three) Standing Buddhas

At the northern end of this wall, next to and slightly above the Contemplative Bodhisattva but turned at an oblique angle towards the north wall, are the remains of two of originally three standing Buddhas (Figs. 4.24, 4.48, 4.49). According to Teng Yü-hsiang, there was originally a rectangular shallow niche

<sup>106</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 692, 719.

<sup>107</sup> These stone stupas will be addressed in subsequent volumes. They date in the 420's and 430's.

about 1.12 m in height, 1.30 m wide (now broken) and 17 cm deep. This shallow niche had a clay back wall with the top curved in an arc shape (largely ruined). “There were three Buddhas in front of the wall screen, but one of them was broken during the restoration of the 1,000 Buddha wall [i.e., No. 15] or even broken earlier. Now, there are two standing Buddhas remaining.”<sup>108</sup> Judging from the construction of the clay wall between the Contemplative Bodhisattva and this group of standing Buddhas as seen in Fig. 4.48, the wall of the standing Buddhas was probably made after the wall of the Contemplative Bodhisattva (the wall juncture fits around the edge of the wall of the Contemplative Bodhisattva, which must have been made first), though there may not have been much significant time difference.

The hand positions of the two standing Buddhas of Group 16 are either holding the robe (up or down) or holding the hand with palm facing the chest and fingers bent with thumb touching the index finger, both without any specific *mudrā*. The Buddha adjacent to the Contemplative Bodhisattva has the right hand raised to the chest with the thumb and index finger touching. The left arm hangs down, but the hand is now lost. It may have been holding the hem of the robe, but this is not clear. The right (facing) Buddha has his right arm hanging down with that hand holding the hem of his garment. His left hand holds the clump of his garment hem against his chest. The gesture of the lowered right arm grasping the hem of the *saṅghāṭī* is common among the standing Buddhas of this cave. It occurs at least in 7 out of the 11 standing early Buddha sculptures still remaining in this cave, including the large Group 18 standing Buddha (Fig. 4.7), probably the earliest example remaining in this cave. The third of the group of three standing Buddhas is entirely missing.

These remaining two standing Buddhas of Group 16 are rather stocky with round heads. Their stance is quite wide and they stand directly on a ledge, without any lotus pedestal. Both Buddhas wear the outer robe with right shoulder exposed, but in each an edge of the robe folds over the right shoulder in the “open sling with shoulder cap” mode (Fig. 4.15d). The hem of the under robe of each can be seen on the chest; it also passes under the right arm and covers only the left shoulder.

According to Teng Yü-hsiang, from the damaged area around the left knee of the left (facing) standing Buddha, it is possible to determine that there are two layers of painted clay surface, thus indicating that the top surface is a second application (that is, a restoration or repair). However, he notes that the outer surface is very thin and does not change the original shape of the image.<sup>109</sup> It seems the newer surface was applied mainly to restore the paint and possibly some light damage. This repair and its probable date will be discussed further below in relation to the repair inscription and images of Group 23 on the South Wall. Because of the repair to these two Group 16 Buddhas, the coloring, and possibly the incised lines, cannot be taken to be original, though it seems likely that the incised lines more or less follow the original. These lines are parallel and closely spaced in a mode quite similar to the style of the Tumshuk Temple “I” images in Fig. 4.31 and also as used in the “Dancing Deva” from Tumshuk-Tagh in Fig. 4.50, whose solid form also relates to that of the Group 16 two Buddhas.<sup>110</sup> The patterning of the lines is looser and more abbreviated than the patterning witnessed in the Niche No. 1 standing Buddha (Fig. 3.9). The directional changes and shifts relate to developments which appear in the Group 22 Buddha, though they are less tentatively portrayed in the Group 22 Buddha (Fig. 5.45). The heads are similar to the best remaining one of the group of five seated Buddhas in Group 16

<sup>108</sup> Teng (1994), p. 9.

<sup>109</sup> Teng (1994), p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> The “Dancing Deva” image from the Eastern Group of Tumshuk-Tagh was dated in Vol. II to ca. mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Rhie (2002), pp. 561-562.

(Fig. 4.38). It would appear that these two standing Buddhas, taking account of the possibilities of restoration, were probably originally made around the time of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva, both approximately ca. 400 A.D.

The paint now seen on the halos and background probably reflects the time of the restoration and application of the new outer surfacing. As they currently appear, the mandorlas and head halos of these two remaining Buddhas are boldly plain. Malachite green and brick red alternate in a series of wide bands. Thin white or black lines are used to outline some of the bands. A solid red jagged flame pattern outlined with black and thin white lines is painted in the zone closest to the body. These flames are not as elaborate as those on most other halos in this cave. Also, the bands of color for both the head halo and the mandorla, in which the round head halos are included, are rounded and not peaked at the top. In the space between the individual mandorlas of each Buddha is painted a large lotus with green stem, white petals with red tip, and large round seed pod with individually drawn circular seed holes. Similar lotuses appear on the South Wall between two seated Buddhas of Group 23 (Fig. 5.33), another complicated group that is involved with the repair inscription, which will be discussed below in the South Wall section. Above the lotus over the left shoulder of the right (facing) Buddha are the remains of flying celestial musicians, which, according to Teng Yü-hsiang, have a style similar to the musicians in the halo of the Group 7 Buddha on the North Wall (Fig. 7.20a).<sup>111</sup>

The sets of three Buddhas in this cave, of which this group is probably one, may be the Buddhas of the Three Times: Present, Past and Future. The Buddha of the Future is Maitreya and the Buddha of the Present is Śākyamuni, but it is not so clear who is considered the Buddha of the Past.<sup>112</sup> The iconography of the Buddhas of the Three Times is an important one, and pervasive in the early sutras translated into Chinese noted above in section II.B.2, as well as those in Appendix II. The appearance of the Buddhas of the Three Times on the West Wall could link these particular representations with the *Lotus Sutra*. For example, in Chapter XIV of the *Lotus Sutra*, when Śākyamuni is speaking to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, he says, "...this sutra is protected by the supernatural powers of all the Buddhas of the past, future, and present."<sup>113</sup> In this case, it may also be possible to think that the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva is Mañjuśrī.<sup>114</sup> Three other sets of three Buddhas in Cave 169, all on the North Wall, are also likely to be the Buddhas of the Three Times: Groups 4, 7 (probably), and 9. There is some variation among these sets, as will be discussed later.

Behind and slightly higher than the Group 16 standing Buddhas is part of another, separate, standing Buddha sculpture, mostly damaged (see drawing in Fig. 4.24). According to Teng Yü-hsiang's report it is in front of the broken wall screen. He comments that remains of paint on the halo of this Buddha indicate the depictions of donors, similar to those in Group 7 on the North Wall.<sup>115</sup> This would suggest that this image dates after ca. 420.

<sup>111</sup> Teng (1994), p. 9.

<sup>112</sup> Several fragmentary inscriptions on Stupa D5 of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century at the site of Jauliān monastery in Taxila, Gandhāra, indicate that the Buddha of the past is Kāśyapa. This stupa and its inscriptions are discussed in Chapter 8, II.C.2.c. However, there are other possibilities, including Dīpaṃkara Buddha.

<sup>113</sup> Translated from the Kumārajīva text (406 A.D.) in Watson (1993), p. 206.

<sup>114</sup> A seated Bodhisattva sculpture in a contemplative pose (missing the head) from Gandhāra, is tentatively identified by Juhyung Rhi as Mañjuśrī. See J. Rhi, "Bodhisattvas in Gandhāran Art: As Aspect of Mahāyāna in Gandhāran Buddhism," in Brancaccio and Behrendt (2006), Fig. 7.9.

<sup>115</sup> Teng (1994), p. 9.

### C. *Concluding Remarks*

Generally, the surviving images of the West (main) Wall, which have been dated here to ca. 385-400, are the earliest remains in Cave 169. They show the strongest stylistic relationship with the early images of Tumshuk and Kizil on the Northern Silk Road in Central Asia from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Kizil Caves 118, 83 and 84), the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century (Kizil Cave 38) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (small wooden sculptures from Tumshuk and Kizil). Even the patterns and the type of incised lines relate to Tumshuk and Kizil works. There appears to be little evidence from South China—not even as much as seen in the Niche No. 1 Buddha, which in addition shows some relation to Rawak and Shan-shan on the Southern Silk Road in Central Asia. It is not possible to say if there was influential connection with the Ch’ang-an area at this time. Ch’ang-an was in turmoil from 385 to ca. 400, so it is unlikely that there was much artistic activity in Ch’ang-an during those years, although persons could have moved from Ch’ang-an into the Kansu area during that time. It is possible that artists, monks and others moved away from Ch’ang-an in its bad times, and perhaps went to areas under the Western Ch’in, and may have had some relation with Ping-ling ssu.

It is known from written records that the first two rulers of the Ch’i-fu were apparently Buddhist, as they revered the monk Sheng-chien, who came to their court and was asked to translate texts. This is another instance of a Buddhist monk translating texts at the behest of the local rulers. Former Liang had such occasion in the 470’s, and Fu Chien of the Former Ch’in sponsored translation work under Tao-an and others in Ch’ang-an from 378 to the spring of 385. This practice gained momentum after 401 with Kumārajīva in Ch’ang-an under Yao Hsing from 401-ca. 410, and it occurred in some of the great monasteries of the capital of the Eastern Chin and [Liu] Sung (though not under imperial sponsorship), and engaged such luminaries as Hui-yüan at Lu Shan and Buddhahadra and Fa-hsien in Chien-k’ang, not to speak of the major work of Dharmakṣema under Chü-ch’ü Meng-hsün of the Northern Liang from ca. 412- early 420’s, all major subjects of later volumes in this series. These translation projects were major events, and no doubt spurred the creation of Buddhist imagery in Buddhist temples of the areas at the same time. In this case, since stylistically the earliest images in Cave 169 seem to date around the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, it may well be that there was some influence from the presence of Sheng-chien for these early images.

Chinese scholars all agree that Cave 169 is Western Ch’in, though they have not gone into much detail with regard to the chronology of the various images within Cave 169. Teng Yü-hsiang, who has done the most work on this cave, divides the making of the Cave 169 images into three phases, placing the stone inner core images in the first phases and earlier than the 420 dated niche. Thus Group 18 is placed by him as having the earliest images in the cave, along with the early wall paintings of Group 10 on the North Wall (Figs. 7.26, 7.27a,b). It is crucial in understanding the early style to apprehend the relationship to the early works of the Northern Silk Road sites, especially the sculptures from Tumshuk and the early wall paintings from Kizil, as they provide the basis not only for seeing the connections with artistic modes coming from outside China, but also allow for reasonable judgment regarding the relative chronology of the images within China.

Another result of this study concerning the images of the West Wall of Cave 169 is with respect to iconography. The appearance in Group 18 of what seems likely to be the ten-direction Buddhas is a major remains and definitely determines the Mahāyāna cast of this cave from the outset. As described above, this whole upper wall would appear to be the display of Śākyamuni Buddha together with his “transformation Tathāgatas” from the ten-directions prior to the opening of the Seven Treasure Stupa of

Prabhūtaratna as recounted in Chapter 11 of the *Cheng-fa-hua ching*, that is, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) as translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in ca. 286 in Ch'ang-an. As such, this would be the earliest and most complete panoramic vision known in Chinese Buddhist art of a major early Mahāyāna text, which became a beloved and popular text in China for centuries.

Further, Group 17 represents one of the earliest known triads in Chinese Buddhist art, and may also be related to the *Lotus Sutra*. Certainly the appearance of the set of five dhyānāsana Buddhas of Group 16 as well as the group of three standing Buddhas (one missing), all point to the popularity of the sets of Buddhas that make up such an important part of Mahāyāna Buddhism at this time, as we can see in the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425 as well as in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan as discussed below in Chapter 8. The “pan-chia ssu-wei” (Contemplative Bodhisattva) of Group 16 is probably the earliest example of this iconographic form in the art of the Kansu cave temples. All of these early (ca. 400) iconographic types are, as we shall see, of immense interest not only in understanding the formative stages of Buddhist art in China, but also are consequential in clarifying the dating and evolution of these forms outside of China, especially for the art of Gandhāra of this time.

Whether or not there is a coherent plan to the West Wall images is not entirely certain at this juncture. Teng Yü-hsiang thinks there is no connected plan within the cave—only individual groups, although he also says that the location of each niche has more priority with regard to the earlier ones.<sup>116</sup> It may be that the Group 17 triad and the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva, the five dhyānāsana Buddhas and the three standing Buddhas (Buddhas of the Three Times) belonged to one configuration, and part of what was the original main ensemble of the lower part of the West Wall, just as the large standing Buddha and ten-direction Buddhas are the main ensemble for the upper part of the West Wall. It is not clear, however, if these two parts had any definite relation, except that they may have a relation to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*). More light will be shed on the importance of these early West Wall images during the course of study of the remaining walls of this cave and, in particular, they become instrumental in considering the dating and iconography of the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan that is studied in Chapter 8.

<sup>116</sup> Teng (1994), p. 20.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### PING-LING SSU CAVE 169: EAST AND SOUTH WALLS

Both of these walls have sustained considerable damage. Nevertheless, very important paintings and sculptures still remain. On the East Wall only one wall painting survives, but it is a very important early one of the thousand Buddhas, an iconographic subject of major significance in early Chinese Buddhist art. The South Wall contains rare paintings of stupas and some superb sculptures. The iconographic scheme or schemes of this wall, despite severe loss of images, presents some intriguing and significant examples that will continue to engage us throughout this and subsequent volumes, particularly involving the iconography of the five Buddhas, an elusive topic that will eventually take us to Gandhāra and to the five great T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang (see Chapter 8 below), and which can, in my view, be best perceived and understood from knowing well the developments in China from the late 4<sup>th</sup> to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.

#### I. EAST (ENTRANCE) WALL: GROUP 24

Much of the East Wall of this large cave may have collapsed along with a considerable portion of the floor of the cave, leaving now a huge opening in the front of the cave (Figs. 5.1 and 4.1b). However, much of a thousand Buddha wall painting panel survives on the upper south side of the wall (Group 24), now hanging from the ceiling over the cave opening (Figs. 5.1, 5.2). Since the thousand Buddha iconography is a prime feature in the Sixteen Kingdoms period cave art in Kansu, this Group 24 painting will be discussed in detail with regard to understanding its style, the sources and roots of the style that help to date the painting, which is certainly among the earliest to survive in all Buddhist art. Further, there is discussion of the particular iconographic features of this important panel which also includes three separate, embedded image panels of special note. In this section the activities of the monk Tao-jung 道融, both at Ping-ling ssu and in Ch'ang-an under Kumārajīva, is crucial for providing a contextual basis for the thousand Buddha wall painting as well as for understanding some of the developments of the history of the cave as a whole.

##### *A. Description, Comparative Analysis, and Stylistic Sources*

On the face of a huge rock mass on the upper right (southern) side of the entrance wall at the ceiling level is a large painting of the thousand Buddhas measuring approximately 5.7m [18.7 ft.] wide and 3.10 m [10.17 ft.] in height (Figs. 5.3, 5.4a and b). Three distinctly different Buddha groups are interspersed among the rows of smaller thousand dhyānāsana Buddhas (Fig. 5.3). All the paintings in Group 24 are executed on a smooth clay surface adhering directly to the rather flat surface of the natural rock wall. It seems like a precarious position, difficult to reach even when the original floor of the cave still remained. It faces directly opposite the southern part of the West (rear) Wall, which is now mostly all

rough stone with only a few patches of wall paintings of flying celestials and part of a Buddha from the Sui and early T'ang period.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. *Thousand Buddha Painting*

The Group 24 painting has about 20 extant rows of seated Buddhas comprising the thousand Buddhas.<sup>2</sup> They are not executed with regard to a rigidly exact schematic layout of the kind usually seen in later paintings of the thousand Buddhas where, by carefully aligning the figures, which are usually of uniform size, and skillfully alternating the choice of colors for the robes, bodies and halos, etc., the illusion of radiating or diagonal directional movement is achieved. Though there is some alternation of colors in the Group 24 painting, they are not organized into this kind of regularized radiating scheme, which does, however appear in the other two thousand Buddha panels in Cave 169 (Groups 15 and 19, discussed in Chapter 7, Figs. 7.58a, b, c) and in other wall paintings of thousand Buddhas in Kansu and Turfan of the Sixteen Kingdoms period (317-439) and later. The lack of such a well executed, formalized scheme in the Group 24 panel is one factor that tends to indicate its earlier date in relation to these other examples. Also, the striking malachite green color seen in the thousand Buddha panel of Groups 15 and 19 and also used in the thousand Buddhas of the wall paintings of the Yeh-chi kou cave 野鷄溝洞窟 (Wild Pheasant Gulch Cave) at Ping-ling ssu discussed in Chapter 7 (Figs. 7.60a, b) as dating in the late 420's, is apparently absent here (or is perhaps only used as a small accent in the arch of the Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna stupa portrayal on the lower right corner). The entire panel is executed with a rather limited color palette; besides the original clay color there is red, white, black and gray.

The myriad of small thousand Buddhas are typically seated in dhyānāsana. Their hands are portrayed on edge with the thumbs extended upwards making a triangular shape in the style well-known in Central Asia from the images of Lou-lan (late 3rd century), Tumshuk (4th century) and elsewhere in Central Asia, as well as in many of the 4<sup>th</sup> century bronze seated Buddhas in China (Figs. 2.1, 2.2, 2.4-2.9). The Buddhas in the Group 24 panel generally have a somewhat individual character, unlike the more mechanically repetitious style appearing in the Group 15 and 19 panels and from other examples from the second half of the 5th century and later. There is, for example, a fair amount of variety between narrow and wide body shapes and in the sizes of the heads of the Buddhas. The folds of the robe, which is worn with both shoulders covered by all the Buddhas, are indicated with only a few simple, rather widely separated lines in most cases. The lines do not have the flair and sweeping vigor of the linear style of the paintings of Groups 11, 12, 13 and 14 from the North Wall of Cave 169, dated in Chapter 7 to ca. 425 (Figs. 7.33, 7.36, 7.37, 7.41, 7.43, 7.52). They are mostly without modeling, although some of the figures of the larger images on the bottom portion do have cursory modeling. There is a vertical line indicting the breast bone on some images.

The Buddhas sit on rather flat lotus seats whose petals are turned down. These petals are drawn in black outline with a teardrop shaped center—a manner followed in most other lotus pedestal depictions in the wall paintings of this cave. However, the style is not as bold, nor are the petals as prominent as in most of the paintings of the North Wall or in the thousand Buddha paintings of Group 15 and 19 (Fig. 7.58b).

<sup>1</sup> Heirinji, 1986, Fig. 70.

<sup>2</sup> One of the more complete rows has 51 remaining Buddhas; 51 x 20 is 1020, perhaps an approximate count that indicates the original 1,000 Buddhas, or perhaps there were even more.

Each Buddha has a round head halo and round mandorla. Above the halos on most of the images is an ovoid shape of a simple canopy (Fig. 5.5). A lotus bud in black and white appears between the halos of most of the thousand Buddhas, especially in the central section. The Buddha configurations near the bottom are a little larger and more spaciouly drawn than those in the upper parts. It may be that a different artist or artists painted this portion, although there could be some other purpose which is not clear. There is considerable overlapping of the halos and images, which are not separated into their own spaces as is customary in most thousand Buddha panels. This may reflect such statements in the texts that the light of the thousand Buddhas, arrayed closely together, overlaps with each other. The unusual casualness, generally not seen in later thousand Buddha paintings, lends credence to the panel being from the early stage of work in this cave, prior to the dated materials of the north wall ca. 420, a factor which also seems to be upheld by the style of the three larger Buddha groups located within the thousand Buddha field.

## 2. *Individual Buddha Groups Within the Thousand Buddha Painting*

Three relatively large Buddha groups are positioned on three different levels at the left, center and lower right within the field of the smaller thousand Buddhas (Figs. 5.3, 5.4a and b). These are an important component of the painting and will be discussed individually.

### a. *Dhyānāsana Buddha Triad with Two Monks*

The group on the left (north) side consists of a seated dhyānāsana Buddha in a dark gray robe flanked by two standing figures wearing long white robes (Figs. 5.4a, 5.5). These attendants, which stand slightly taller than the seated Buddha, appear to be bhikṣus with shaven heads. They hold their hands clasped together near their waists in a quiet, waiting posture. There are examples of similar triads in Kushana period Gandhāran-Bactrian regional art, one excellent example of which is the marble triad from Fayaz-tepe, near Termez in southern Uzbekistan datable to ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> to mid- 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.6).<sup>3</sup>

The figures in this triad are quite simply portrayed with proportionately large heads and bodies with narrow, sloping shoulders. In general shape and form the two standing attendant monks closely resemble the monk figures in the small bronze group in the Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku in Fig. 2.7, dated in Vol. II to Phase II, ca. 375. The shape of the form and the robe portrayal with sweeping lines over the forearms and legs of the Buddha are elements that are quite close to the portrayals in the dhyānāsana Buddhas in the wooden lintel from Lou-lan of ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.20). This is a type which seems to persist for several generations. Other painted images in Cave 169 show a similar type of seated Buddha, but executed with more developed and boldly skillful technique, as seen in the seated Buddha from the North Wall paintings in Fig. 7.28. This particular representational type for dhyānāsana Buddhas of small or moderate scale appears to be one standard type in Cave 169; it can be distinguished from the portrayal used for the seated teaching Buddha with the abhayā mudrā, such as seen in other triads of both Group 24 and Group 11 (Figs. 5.8a and 7.36). It is as though there were several different types of Buddhas in the Cave 169 paintings being used for particular iconographic reasons, one clearly representing the meditative aspect of the Buddha as contrasted with the teaching aspect of the Buddha.

White is used to highlight parts of the facial features, notably the nose bridge, chin, eyelid and above the eyebrows, but the “T” shaped style of combining the nose bridge with a horizontal stroke above the

<sup>3</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 194-195.

eyebrows as used in the images of the central group b) of this panel or in some of the paintings of the North Wall (Figs. 5.8a and 7.37) does not appear to have been used in this triad a). Both techniques seem to have been used concurrently, perhaps depending upon the particular artist. Red and black contour lines are used, but there seem to be few, if any, internal drapery lines. The Buddha's dark gray robe is edged with red curved hems around the draping over the arms, the apron-like flap in the center, and for the neck cowl. There is a linear designation of the lines of his neck and the breast bone. The white robes of the monks appear to be plain, which would be an interesting early example of a style which is known in Indian paintings at Ajanta (last quarter of the 5th century). White robes for monks are also seen in the Parinirvāṇa painting in Kizil Cave 38 of ca. mid or third quarter of the 4th century and appear later in Tun-huang wall paintings.

The head halos of all three figures as well as the mandorla of the seated Buddha are round and composed of simple, wide, plain bands—red and black for all the head halos and red and white for the mandorla of the seated Buddha. A bold flame pattern outlined in red appears in the red section of the seated Buddha's mandorla (Fig. 5.5). The round tops of the head halo and mandorla coincide, similar to those used in Kizil Caves 83, 77 and others (Figs. 4.11, 4.20). The usage of broad bands in the head halos and mandorla is also characteristic of the early wall paintings from Temple "I" at Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk, dated in Vol. II to first half of the 4th century (Fig. 5.7). Above the Buddha's mandorla there is a white canopy with red and black at the scalloped lower border. The canopy in this group and the other individual groups in Group 24 are not as boldly portrayed as those appearing in the North Wall paintings of Groups 11 and 12 (Figs. 7.31, 7.33) datable to ca. 425; nevertheless, they are rather fancy in design. The Buddha sits on a low, circular, dark gray lotus pedestal whose single narrow row of upward and downward petals is separated by a black curved horizontal line.

#### b. *Teaching Buddha Triad*

The Buddha triad in the center of the thousand Buddha panel (Figs. 5.3, 5.4b, 5.8a, b) is larger than the dhyānāsana Buddha triad a) (Fig. 5.5). It portrays a seated Buddha and two standing attendants who are equal in height to the seated Buddha and closely flank him on each side. This triad is a particularly active group in distinction to the meditative group of the left triad a) in Fig. 5.5. The Buddha, contrasted with the dhyānāsana Buddha, for example, is portrayed with broad shoulders and a more powerful body. He holds the hem of his robe in his left hand, which is raised to a little above waist level, and his right hand has a boldly displayed gesture. The right arm is extended energetically outward to the side with an upward bend at the elbow. The wall painting surface is broken off just at the root of the fingers, so the finger positions are not known, but judging from the depiction of the palm and the thumb, it would appear that his right hand is held in the abhayā mudrā.<sup>4</sup> The flat open palm of the hand faces forward, closely resembling the abhayā mudrā gesture of the Amarāvati and Nāgājunakoṇḍā school images from South India around the 1st-early 4th century A.D. (Fig. 5.9). This gesture for the abhayā mudrā is a distinct type. Other examples of the abhayā mudrā in the paintings of Cave 169 tend to show the arm turned inward (not outward) towards the center of the body with the gesture of the hand more restrained and gently inclined backward (Figs. 7.33, 7.35).

The outward gesture occurs in other instances in the cave paintings of Kansu during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, and also in the late fifth century, such as in Tun-huang Cave 251 (Fig. 5.10). This

<sup>4</sup> Another possibility would be the vitarka mudrā, but this is unlikely—even the North Wall Buddhas in similar position display the abhayā and not the vitarka mudrā.

latter example dates ca. last quarter of the 5th century and is a major panel with a large seated Buddha usually denoted as a “preaching Buddha” or “teaching Buddha” scene. By the time of the Tun-huang Cave 251 example, the whole ensemble is much more elaborately developed and the execution much more assured and bold compared with the Group 24 examples we are discussing here. This phenomena will be witnessed time and again throughout our study of the early 5th century: later 5th century works will frequently utilize elements of the early images (both iconographically and stylistically), but in an evolved way with some stylistic changes. It is therefore necessary to be particular about the stages of development by considering all the factors of the representation, and not simply to rely on the posture of an image for dating. Most likely, this particular gesture indicates a teaching mudrā.

The saṅghāṭī on the seated Buddha of triad b) is loosely draped over the right shoulder and under the raised right arm in the open sling mode with shoulder cap, thus revealing a major portion of the shape of the body trunk with bared right chest, shoulder and arm, sharply indented waist, and part of the abdomen, which slopes outward. The outer robe is bordered by a wide band in a color different from that of the under robe, in this case a red robe with black bands. This dramatic color emphasis heightens the power of the Buddha’s representation. The underside of the outer robe is white as it appears behind the raised right arm. The Buddha’s feet and hands are large (as apparently was the head, which is now mostly destroyed).

The Buddha sits on a large, low circular lotus pedestal with alternating red and black petals executed in a sketchy manner. The pod is white and has little circles for the seed holes. The mandorla has a circular head halo (with a red inner band and a white outer band) and circular body halo which is filled with long, almost vertical, wavy flame patterns of alternating stripes of red, black and white. The mandorla is clearly round and does not have a pointed top. As noted earlier in Chapter 4 (II.A.1.c), the round shaped mandorla is early, as witnessed in the Lou-lan niches and some of the early cave paintings at Kizil (Caves 118, 83, 84, 77). The particular filling of wavy vertical lines in the body halo or mandorla, though rarely seen, does occur in several notable examples, such as the mandorlas of the Buddhas in the stone stupa of Chi-te from Tun-huang dated 426 (Fig. 5.11), and in the mandorlas of the seated Buddha in the Chang-ch’ōn Tomb No. 1 discussed in Vol. II as dating ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.12), both of which appear to be of a somewhat later and more angular style. The examples seen in two of the small wooden Buddhas from Kizil Cave 76 in Figs. 5.13a and b afford an indication of at least one possible, prominent link for this type of mandorla with the Northern Silk Route in Central Asia. These two wooden Buddhas were studied independently from the Chinese materials in Vol. II and found to date, relative to internal comparisons, to works of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> They also have the round form of mandorla, but with no head halo and only an outer band around the flame pattern filling.

Above the halo of the Group 24 b) Buddha is a gracefully curved canopy with large gray, white and red stripes and with wavy edges whose points end in a round red circle (perhaps a jewel) within the white border. It looks as though a tear-drop shaped pendant hangs from some of them, similar to the pendants of the canopies of the small bronze altars,<sup>6</sup> although some of the tear-drop shaped black forms in the space around the canopy are clearly floating lotus buds. These, however, seem to be different from the downward pointing ones, which may be the hanging pendants. If they are hanging pendants, then this is a rare painted example of what is known in two surviving bronze altars of Phase

<sup>5</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 698-699 and 701.

<sup>6</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.40d, e.



II (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century). Later representations of canopies in paintings, including those in Cave 169 from the north wall, do not have hanging pendants.

The two standing attendants seem to reflect an Indian style with their vigorous arm movements and bent bodies. They are probably Bodhisattvas, but there is a possibility that they could represent Indra and Brahmā, though the attributes are not clear. Figures of this type can be seen in the Kushana period Mathurā sculptures and in the Amāravatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍā sculptures from South India ca. 1<sup>st</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century. On the side near the Buddha their arms are raised over their heads. It is not possible to make out what objects these upraised hands hold—in Indian examples it is usually a yak-tail whisk or a vajra, as may be the case here. Both figures grasp a bunch of their scarves in their lowered hands. The Group 17 standing Bodhisattva sculpture also seems to hold the scarf in the right hand (Fig. 4.24, 4.25b, 4.26a, b). The hem of the scarf of the attendant at the Buddha's right is delicately pleated with a series of tiny semicircles in the hem similar to the style of the hem on the bronze Buddha with Kharoṣṭhī inscription dated in Vol. II to ca. 375 (Fig. 2.4). This motif is seen frequently in the hems of Mathurā seated Buddhas of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, like the one in Fig. 4.47. These two attendants wear two bracelets, and the arm band of the left attendant has a pearl-rimmed, circular jewel as ornament. Over their torsos are crossed straps or jewel chains, a relatively rare depiction in Chinese Buddhist art, especially before the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. This kind of decoration appears in Indian art, mainly from the high Gupta and post-Gupta periods (at Bhuteswar, Bhumara, and Deogarh), especially in terracottas of the 5<sup>th</sup> to mid-6<sup>th</sup> century. It also occurs in images from the Central Asian site of Toqquz-Sarai Temple "I" at Tumshuk of the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>7</sup> and then later, ca. mid-5<sup>th</sup> century at the Ming-oi site of Shorchuk near Karashahr on the Northern Silk Route,<sup>8</sup> and is a prominent feature of Sassanian Persian art.

The dhotis of the attendant figures have a hemline with pointed ends, usually two, between the legs, and curved hems over the legs. A sash hangs from the belt at both sides of their dhotis, a feature seen in the sculptures of Temple "I" at Toqquz-Sarai (Fig. 4.45b). In the case of the Group 24 examples, these sashes are rather abbreviated and not too realistically portrayed. A simple version appears in the sculpted Bodhisattva of the Group 22 images on the South Wall of Cave 169 (Fig. 5.53).

The head halos of the attendants in this Group 24 panel have a large inner band of white and narrower outer one of red—the exact reverse of the Buddha's head halo. They stand with feet widely spaced on the edges of the white lotus pedestal whose pod has a row of seed holes represented with round black circles—an interesting realistic touch that is also seen in the lotus pods of the North Wall paintings (Figs. 7.31a,b, 7.35).

On the left side (facing) of this group b) painting is a vertical white band cartouche for an inscription, but no letters can be distinguished. Above the cartouche is a lotus branch. The style of the buds is very similar to the representations in the paintings of Karadong (near Khotan) of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> On the far right side of the triad (facing) is a vertical arrangement of three dhyanāsana Buddhas very like the thousand Buddhas, but a little larger. Possibly they are separate from the thousand Buddhas, in which case they may represent the Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future. A shallow, flat, black ground plane acts like the floor of a niche and as a base for the triad.

<sup>7</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 3.20.

<sup>8</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 5.8b, c.

<sup>9</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 4.86a, b, c.

This teaching Buddha triad with the Buddha in the abhayā mudrā accompanied by two standing attendants (most likely Bodhisattvas) is especially important in relation to the study of early Buddha triad depictions, a major iconographic type in Chinese Buddhist art. The figural style seems to be closer to older traditions partly based on Kushana Mathurā and Amarāvati/Nāgārjunakoṇḍā artistic styles. The stylistic elements pointed out above, such as the elements relating with the Karadong paintings and the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha, point towards an early style in this triad, while other features, such as the filling pattern of the halo, suggest that these styles could continue as late as the 420's and 430's.

Triad forms are known in Gandhāran art, but this triad does not appear to follow the style of the Gandhāran triads. In Central Asia the triad form was not popular in the sites inclined towards Hinayāna thought. Triads of a seated teaching Buddha with standing attendants is seen in the wall paintings of Kuntura GK Cave 20, dated in Vol. II to ca. first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> It is also likely to be a form used in Khotan and it does appear in some surviving wall paintings of the Toyuk caves in Turfan. Both are sites important for the evolution of the Mahāyāna forms in Central Asia. The stylistic links with the Amarāvati/Nāgārjunakoṇḍā school images could indicate that there were some influences from South China in the Group 24 painting, since South China appears to have had a closer relationship with South India and Sri Lanka than did North or Northwestern China.

c. *Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the Seven Jewel Stupa*

The third panel within the thousand Buddhas of Group 24 shows two Buddhas seated side-by-side in a large arched niche representing a stupa (Figs. 5.3, 5.14a, b). The lower portion of the representation is worn out, but enough remains of the left (facing) image to see that the Buddha sits with legs pendant and is turned towards the Buddha at the right (facing). The hem of the robe as it hangs over the legs still partly remains, appearing as a dark semicircular strip (Figs. 5.14a, b). The image sits on a light colored cushion, which appears on the seat at the left side underneath the bands of the mandorla (Fig. 5.14b). A similar representation of the two seated Buddhas which is better preserved appears in the Group 11 painting of the North Wall (Figs. 5.15a, b). Though the latter dates ca. 425 and there are some stylistic differences, the two paintings follow the same basic design, which may have become a tradition in the Cave 169 paintings.

Between the two Buddhas is a white colophon band with some remains of black ink writing. Most of the characters can still be read. They are aligned in two vertical columns (reading from right to left in the original colophon):

To-pao fo yü Shih-chia-mou-ni fo ??

多寶佛與釋迦牟尼佛 □ □

The colophon reads “To-pao fo and Shih-chia-mou-ni fo ...”, meaning “Prabhūtaratna Buddha and Śākyamuni Buddha”; the last two characters are missing.<sup>11</sup> This inscription reinforces the unmistakable visual identity of this representation, well-known in Chinese art from later examples, as Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated together inside the Seven Jeweled Stupa as described in Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*).<sup>12</sup> If we take the inscription as an indication, then the Buddha

<sup>10</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.82a.

<sup>11</sup> *Heirinji*, 1986, p. 227, text for fig. 15 has the characters. The characters Shih-chia-mou-ni-fo are those used in Kumārajīva's translations.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 4 for discussion and translation of parts of the Dharmarakṣa translation of 286 A.D., the *Cheng fa-hua ching*.

on the right (facing) would be Prabhūtaratna and the left one is Śākyamuni. Śākyamuni gestures with his right arm across his chest and turns towards Prabhūtaratna, who is seated turning slightly towards Śākyamuni (Fig. 5.14b). Prabhūtaratna probably had his right hand in the abhayā mudrā. Śākyamuni holds the hem of his robe in his left hand. This was probably also the case with Prabhūtaratna, judging from the Group 11 painting (Fig. 5.15a, b).

Examples of the two Buddhas seated side by side are exceedingly rare in the early Buddhist art of India, Gandhāra and Central Asia. There is one example in the large teaching Buddha stele relief from Gandhāra now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta in Fig. 5.16. It has two Buddhas seated dhyānāsana in part of the gable niche above the main teaching Buddha. However, it still remains difficult to determine if this stele is a representation of the *Lotus Sutra*.

In the Group 24 painting the two Buddhas sit side-by-side within the dome-like arch of a stupa topped by a “W” shaped set of three masts with canopies (yaṣṭi with chattras). This same kind of “W” shaped mast with stacks of umbrellas (canopies) also occurs on the stupa of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the paintings of Groups 11 and 13 on the North Wall (Figs. 5.15a, 7.26, 7.28, 7.43), both of which are more elaborately presented, though the Group 13 example only survives in the upper portion. Similar clusters of three masts, each with umbrellas (chattra), occur in the wall painting of stupas in Group 23 on the South Wall (Fig. 5.23), but the masts are somewhat individually positioned rather than making the distinctly clear “W” shape (see discussion below for Group 23). The “W” shape used in the stupa of Prabhūtaratna might refer to the “W” motif which occurs as a symbol in early Indian Buddhist art, known as the “nandyāvarta”. It is seen on Buddhapadas (Buddha’s footprints), such as appear in the examples from Sikri (near Peshāwar in Gandhāra) in Fig. 5.17a, as a support for the triratna (three jewels) or the dharmachakra (Dharma wheel), etc., in all schools of early Indian art, including that of Gandhāra.<sup>13</sup> It also seems to appear as a finial on the top of a reliquary stupa, as seen in the paintings of Cave 38 at Kizil of ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.17b).

Stylistically the two Buddhas are similar to the abhayā mudrā Buddha in the central group b), but with variations in the hand gestures, robe portrayal and mandorla design, etc. The right shoulders are bare. Their bodies are light color with red lines used for outlines. The mandorlas with circular head and body halos are composed of concentric plain bands and do not have the wave pattern as seen in the mandorla of the group b) Buddha. A white canopy appears above each in a form similar to that used in the thousand Buddha images. They are not as elaborate as the canopies of the Group 11 and 13 paintings of ca. 425 (Figs. 5.15a, b and 7.28, 7.33, 7.43). The thick rim of the stupa arch contains a pattern of

<sup>13</sup> The “W” motif is an ancient symbol, listed as one of the 108 symbols. It is sometimes called a “nandipada,” but recent scholarship has shown that it is probably a “nandyāvarta,” an auspicious symbol. See the extensive and detailed study by Anna Maria Quagliotti, *Buddhapadas*, Kamakura, 1998, especially Chapter II (Symbols on Buddhapadas). In her study she remarks on the sources of the lists which describe the marks on the Buddha’s feet. This symbol may have disappeared from Indian art in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, though it remained on the lists (pp. 86-87, 143, 162, 167). The lists continue as part of the Mūlasarvāstivādin tradition (pp. 86-87) and appear in many Mahāyāna sutras in the lists of symbols on the Buddha’s feet (p. 149). She notes that this symbol can be seen in some of the wall paintings at Kizil (Caves 207, 69) and also notes its occurrence “on the summit of some stupas” in the Kizil wall paintings (p. 149), but in note 5 on the same page she suggests these might be trīśūlas. A depiction of the symbol on the feet of a Gandhāra stone Buddha is illustrated in Figs. 39-40. She also notes: “By a process not yet understood, the nadyāvarta came to be interpreted in Chinese as King Brahmā’s uṣṇīṣa or turban,” a term seen in the *Kuan-fo san-mei hai ching* (p. 87, referencing P. Skilling, “Symbols on the Body, Feet, and Hands of a Buddha, II—Short Lists,” *Journal of the Siam Society*, 1996).

For an example of a trīśūla, triratna, or “W” form in a wooden stupa from Tumshuk-tagh on the Northern Silk Route and now in Berlin, see M. Rhie (2002), fig. 3.89. The examples in the Cave 169 Group 24 is definitely a “W” shape support, not a mere finial.

alternating parallelograms separated by some narrow slanted strips. In addition to the red, black and white colors, possibly some green color occurs in some of the narrow strips. These vari-colored strips may represent the seven jewel substances from which Prabhūtarana's stupa is said to be made (see translation of the text in Chapter 4, II.B.3.a).

### 3. *Summary Conclusions*

From the analysis of the individual elements of the Group 24 thousand Buddhas presented above, though some elements relate to the bronze sculptures of North China from ca. 375 A.D. and to remains from the Southern Silk Road (Karadong and Lou-lan), most features relate with the art from the Northern Silk Road sites at Tumshuk and Kucha of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. These indications suggest that the paintings of Group 24 are relatively early, possibly around the same time or shortly after the making of the earliest images of the West Wall (Groups 18 and 17), suggested above as dating ca. 385-400. The association with imagery of the Amarāvati/Nāgārjunakoṇḍa schools of South India, which is most likely to have come to China via South China, could interestingly suggest some influences from South China on the Group 24 painting, though this is at present difficult to establish.

The Group 24 wall paintings seem to be among the oldest surviving wall paintings in Cave 169. The colors are limited and there is slight, if any, usage of the malachite green. Presumably the green color became more popular or more readily available (or the donors provided more funds) for the paintings of the North Wall, which show a liberal usage of malachite green and some of lapis lazuli blue as well. The irregular grouping of the thousand Buddha patterns, which are less formally and exactly planned than the other thousand Buddha panels in the cave, is probably an indication of the initial or less developed manner occurring in the early stages of the representation of the theme at this site.

#### B. *Dedicatory Inscription, Biography of Tao-jung, and Dating of the Group 24 Painting*

At the immediate left side (facing) of the panel of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the Jeweled Stupa is a rectangular vertical white colophon with the remains of a black ink inscription (Fig. 5.14a). It reads as follows:

比丘慧眇道弘  
 □□曇□(願)曇要□化道融慧(通)  
 僧(林)道元道(明)道新□□□□□  
 (等)共造此千佛(像)願生長□□佛.....  
 .....  
 □□妙化衆生(彌)  
 (勒)(初)下.....供養千佛成□衆正  
 覺

Bhikṣus Hui-miao, Tao-hung, ? ?, Tan-(yüan), Tan-yao, (?) -hua, Tao-jung, Hui-(t'ung), Seng-(lin), Tao-yüan, Tao-(ming), Tao-hsin, ? -, ? -, ? , together made this thousand Buddha representation (hsiang) wishing to be born long ?? Buddha ..... ?? mystical transformation assembly born [at the time of] (Mi)-(t'o) [Maitreya] (beginning to) come down ..... honor (kung-yang) the thousand Buddhas complete ? assembly Perfect Enlightenment.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 16.

This inscription says that the monks Hui-miao, Tao-hung, Tan-yüan, Tan-yao, Tao-jung, Hui-t'ung, Tao-yüan, Tao-hsin and others—naming altogether 15 monks (some names are missing)—together made this image (representation) of the thousand Buddhas. The latter portion is partly missing, but seems to speak of a wish to be born at the time of Maitreya's descent and the mystical transformation assemblies. The last statement suggests that they [i.e., this group in the inscription] will honor (kung-yang) the thousand Buddhas up to Perfect Enlightenment. There is no date remaining in the inscription. However, the name of Tao-jung 道融 also appears in a colophon in Group 6 on the North Wall of Cave 169 (with the same characters). This Group 6 colophon accompanies a painting of a monk figure, which is probably the image of Tao-jung. Both are located just below the left corner (facing) of the Group 6 large inscription dated 424 (or 420) and are related to the making of the Group 6 Amitāyus triad niche. More than likely it is the same person in both inscriptions, as already noted by Teng Yü-hsiang and others. However, the Group 6 paintings and inscriptions can be dated to ca. 424 (or 420) and the stylistic assessments made above for the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting strongly suggests a dating ca. 400, so there is an evident time difference. The possible reasons for this time difference can be reasonably understood from the biography of the monk Tao-jung 道融.

The Tao-jung in the two inscriptions in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 is probably the same person as the biography of Tao-jung 道融 in the *Kao-seng chuan* (compiled ca. 518). This biography can be taken to shed further light on the career of Tao-jung and to provide some important information that is pertinent to the dating of the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting. Because of its significance in further understanding the art of Cave 169, this biography is translated here in full:

Shih Tao-jung 釋道融 was a Chi chün 汲郡 Lin-lu 林慮 person. He became a monk at age twelve. His teacher liked his spiritual appearance (unusual comportment) and first asked him to study the “outside” literature (i.e., the non-Buddhist writings). So he went to the village, borrowed the Lun-yü 論語, but did not return with it, and then recited it. The teacher again borrowed the book and covered it so that not even one character was shown. Then he sighed and considered him to be extraordinary. Thereupon he [Tao-jung] was allowed to roam around and study.

By the time he was thirty years old his intelligence became excellent without limit. He internally kept in his mind inner and outer [Buddhist and non-Buddhist] scriptures and writings. Then he heard that Kumārajīva was in the kuan (i.e., Ch'ang-an). Therefore he went to petition [to study with him]. Kumārajīva saw him and considered him to be unusual. He said to Yao Hsing 姚興 [ruler of the Later Ch'in], “Yesterday I saw gentleman (kung 公) [Tao-] jung. He is an especially extraordinarily talented Buddha's son. Yao Hsing invited him [Tao-jung], saw him and marveled. [Yao Hsing] ordered him to enter the Hsiao-yao yüan 逍遙園 for attending to collating and examining the translations. Then [Yao Hsing] requested Kumārajīva to put out the *P'u-sa chieh-pen* 菩薩戒本.<sup>15</sup> It is presently popular in the world. Afterwards he translated the *Chung-lun* 中論,<sup>16</sup> so [Yao Hsing] obtained [these] two chüan. Then [Tao-] jung lectured [on these texts], analyzed the literature, and saw through them from beginning to end. Kumārajīva also ordered [Tao-] jung to lecture on the *Hsin Fa-hua* 新法華.<sup>17</sup> Kumārajīva himself heard him and sighing said, “The Buddha Dharma is rising, and [Tao-] jung is the person.” [i.e., the Buddha Dharma is rising, and it is because of Tao-jung; or, if the Buddha Dharma is to prosper, it is because of Tao-jung].

Then there was a Brahmin in Sri Lanka who was a talented discourses, widely learned. He recited through all the heterodox books of the Western lands. He was the master of his country's wai-tao 外道 (non-Buddhist learning). He heard that Kumārajīva was in the kuan (Ch'ang-an) greatly propagating Buddhism.

<sup>15</sup> Maybe around the time of the *Ta-chih tu lun* which was translated in 402-405. The biography of Kumārajīva in the *Kao-seng chuan* has it rather late in the list of translations, but it is not certain if the titles are arranged by dates of translation.

<sup>16</sup> The Middle Treatise (Mādhyamika Sastra). This was done in 409. Rhie (2002), p. 400.

<sup>17</sup> The *Lotus Sutra*, translated by Kumārajīva in 406. Rhie (2002), p. 400.



He then said to his followers, “Is it preferable that Buddha’s influence is the only one transmitted to China, so our correct path does not penetrate to the eastern nations?” Subsequently, riding a camel and carrying books, he entered Ch’ang-an. When Yao Hsing saw him, his mouth and eyes were specious and Yao Hsing was very much suspicious of him. The Brahmin then stated to Yao Hsing saying, “As far as the supreme Tao is concerned, there is no limit [or: the supreme Tao is limitless]. We all respect each path. Now I request with Chin 晉 monks to wrestle with their debating power, and will follow the victorious one, and transmit that path (i.e., have to follow the path of whoever wins). Yao Hsing immediately allowed this.

At that time in Ch’ang-an when the monks and the crowd (everyone) looked at each other, they realized they were lacking anyone who would dare to meet this challenge. Kumārajīva said to [Tao-] jung, “This heterodox path person is brilliant and outstanding. [If you] wrestle (hold the horns) with his words, then you will definitely win. In making the unsurpassable great path, if my disciple loses, it is very sad indeed. If we let the heterodox get his wish, then the axle of the Dharma wheel is ravaged. How could this be possible? As I see it, you are the one person [who can win].”

[Tao-] jung reflected that the power of his talent was not lacking, but [he had not yet] completely read through the heterodox scriptures. So he secretly ordered a person to go make a list of scriptures which the Brahmin read. Then once reading them, he recited them. Later, on the decided date, [they] debated the theories. Yao Hsing himself attended. All the high officials gathered below the palace building. Monks and crowds of people from Kuan-chung (Shensi) assembled from all directions. [In his debate] with the Brahmin, Tao-jung intended to respond and defend in sharp argument and quick, abstruse retorts which [the Brahmin] did not fathom. The Brahmin himself knew that his statements and reasoning were condescending, yet he was proud of his wide reading. [Tao-] jung then listed out the books he read and the classics and histories of Chin land with their titles and volumes. It was three times more than his [the Brahmin’s]. Kumārajīva jeered at him saying, “You have not heard of great Chin’s wide learning? How could you so carelessly come from far away?” The Brahmin’s mind was chagrined and ashamed, and he respectfully prostrated his head to [Tao-] jung’s feet. In several days he left. Carrying images [i.e., Buddhism] again prospered—that is due to [Tao-] jung’s power.

Tao-jung later returned to P’eng-ch’eng 彭城. He always continuously lectured. Those who heard the way [i.e., Buddhism] from him were more than 1,000. Those disciples following him numbered more than 300. His personality was not disrespectful or rude. He always climbed the pavilion (lou 樓) to clear his mind [to rejuvenate his mind and body]. He was diligent, attentive, and a good influence. Up to the end of his life he propagated the Dharma. Later, he died at P’eng-ch’eng at the age of 74. He authored a theoretical commentary on the *Fa-hua* 法華 (*Lotus Sutra*), the *Ta-p’in* 大品, the *Chin-kuang ming* 金光明 (*Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*), the *Shih-ti* 十地, the *Wei-mo* 維摩 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*) and others. All were popular in the world.<sup>18</sup>

From the biography of Tao-jung, we learn that he became a monk at age 12. He amazed his teacher with his ability to quickly learn and recite, which was shown by the anecdote concerning the Confucian classic, the *Lün-yü*. After that Tao-jung was given permission by his teacher to “roam and study”, which means that Tao-jung traveled around and studied in various places. Then he heard about Kumārajīva and went to Ch’ang-an where he caught the attention of Kumārajīva who recommended him to Yao Hsing, ruler of the Later Ch’in under whom Kumārajīva was working on translating many Buddhist sculptures in the largest translation project China had seen at that time.<sup>19</sup> Yao Hsing also marveled at Tao-jung and put him to work on the translation projects. He also distinguished himself with his lectures on the *P’u-sa chieh lun* and the *Chung-lun* (translated in 409) and the *Hsin Fa-hua* (translated in 406). Kumārajīva regarded him so highly that he exclaimed to Yao Hsing that Buddhism’s prosperity would be due to Tao-jung. This was indeed demonstrated when a Brahmin known for his debate skills from Sri Lanka came to China on a camel carrying many books. He challenged to debate his theories

<sup>18</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 6, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 363b-c.

<sup>19</sup> For a translation of Kumārajīva’s biography, see Rhie (2002), pp. 388-399.



against those of Kumārajīva, a challenge that Yao-hsing immediately accepted. Kumārajīva knew the seriousness of this debate and that the Brahmin was very learned and skillful. He told Tao-jung that he, Tao-jung, was the one to debate the Brahmin and that the debate would be important and a sad thing if the Buddhist side lost. Tao-jung knew some of the books of the Brahmin, but not all. So he secretly had someone make a list of all the Brahmin's books, which he then read and was able to recite. In the debate, which was attended by Yao-hsing and crowds of officials, monks and people from all over, he used sharp arguing and abstruse retorts, which the Brahmin could not fathom. Though the Brahmin knew he was defeated, he was still proud of the large quantity of books he had learned from his tradition. Tao-jung listed out the books he had read and the classics and histories from the Chinese tradition with their titles and number of volumes, which amounted to three times more than those of the Brahmin. Kumārajīva finished him off by scoffing at the Brahmin for so carelessly coming from so far away without knowing the great traditions of learning in China. With this the Brahmin prostrated at Tao-jung's feet. A few days later the Brahmin left.

After this debate, Tao-jung was undoubtedly famous and widely known. The biography specifically notes that the carrying of images (i.e., Buddhist belief) once again prospered, meaning that Tao-jung had saved the day in a great debate that was important for the propagation of Buddhism in China. Later, Tao-jung went to P'eng-ch'eng in Kiangsu, a city famous for its early centers of Buddhism, and became a noted teacher and writer of commentaries, including one on the *Lotus Sutra*. He died there at age 74.

If we now return to Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and the two inscriptions with Tao-jung's name (assuming they are the same Tao-jung, which more than likely they are), we can tentatively reconstruct how they may fit with his biography. In Group 24, the east wall thousand Buddha panel, Tao-jung's name occurs with a group of 15-some monks, that is, as one among a larger group of monks who made the thousand Buddha painting. These monks may have been studying or meditating together at this cave and decided to donate a large panel of the thousand Buddhas and to make a vow to honor the thousand Buddhas, etc. According to the style analysis presented above, the Group 24 painting is an early painting in this cave and has elements matching with various paintings and sculptures from the Northern Silk Route sites, such as Kizil and Tumshuk, that were independently dated in Volume II to around the mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The Group 6 painting on the North Wall has a colophon that states "Bhikṣu Tao-jung's image" next to a figure of a standing monk (Figs. 7.12a, b). The paintings of Group 6 date to around the time of the 424 (or 420) inscription in the Group 6 Amitāyus niche, thus dating later than the stylistically earlier Group 24 thousand Buddha panel. The apparent difference is between Tao-jung listed as one monk in a group of 15 monks in the Group 24 inscription and Tao-jung as a famous individual monk identified by his own colophon in the Group 6 painting of ca. 424 (or 420), located just behind as the country's meditation master (ch'an-shih 禪師), T'an-wu-pi 曇無毘 (same as T'an-ma-pi). T'an-wu-pi had also been at Mai-chi shan at the same time as Hsüan-kao (see biography in Chapter 1). It seems likely that the Group 24 inscription may have been made at the time Tao-jung was "roaming and studying", that is, before he went to Ch'ang-an to see and work with Kumārajīva, and that the Group 6 portrait and colophon was made after Tao-jung had distinguished himself in the translating and teaching work of Kumārajīva, as well as in winning the crucial debate with the Brahmin in Ch'ang-an, a feat which must have given him great noto-

riety. Since the debate took place while Kumārajīva was still alive (died ca. 409, 410, 411 or 413),<sup>20</sup> and the Group 6 paintings are ca. 424 (or 420), there is no question that he was a famous and distinguished monk by that time of the Group 6 colophon and painting.

Furthermore, the dates when Tao-jung was in Ch'ang-an with Kumārajīva can be rather closely estimated to at least before 409, the date of the *Chung-lun*, which is stated in the biography as coming out after the *P'u-sa chieh lun*, both of which Tao-jung is stated to have lectured on. It is even likely that Tao-jung arrived in Ch'ang-an a few years earlier. Tao-jung is stated to have lectured on the *Hsin Fa-hua* (Kumārajīva's translation of the *Saddharmapundarika Sūtra*, i.e., the *Lotus Sutra*), which Kumārajīva put out in 406 as the *Miao fa lien hua ching*, so possibly Tao-jung was in Ch'ang-an by that time as well. The date when Tao-jung left Ch'ang-an is not stated, but it would probably have been after the death of Kumārajīva (409, 410, 411, or 413), as he was working with Kumārajīva's translation team. With the death of Yao Hsing, ruler of the Later Ch'in, in 416, Ch'ang-an began its rapid downward spiral into chaos, which consumed the city from 418-420. By 418 most monks had left the city and fled south or to the territory of the T'o-pa Wei in the northeast. Tao-jung probably left sometime between the death of Kumārajīva and 418. He may have gone to Ping-ling ssu again at this time. That his portrait is in a prominent place among the donors of the Group 6 images suggests that he may have been at the site, possibly at the same time as the famous monk T'an-wu-pi, who is the first monk portrait and colophon among the Group 6 donors (see Chapter 7 for details). The biography says Tao-jung went to P'eng-ch'eng in the South and died at age 74. Once he went to P'eng-ch'eng he probably did not again go to Ping-ling ssu, so it is unlikely that the Group 24 donor inscription was done after the ca. 424 (or 420) colophon and Tao-jung's portrait in Group 6. It is not really reasonable to think that the Group 24 inscription was a work later than Group 6 of ca. 424 (or 420).

Because the style of the Group 24 painting is earlier than the paintings of Group 6 of ca. 424 (or 420), and because Tao-jung was in Ch'ang-an from ca. 405, or at least 409, and probably remained there with Kumārajīva at least until Kumārajīva died or Yao Hsing died, it is most reasonable to think that the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting was done during Tao-jung's period of "roaming and studying", that is, before he went to Ch'ang-an to see and work with Kumārajīva. If the Tao-jung of the *Kao-seng chuan* biography and of the two Cave 169 inscriptions are all the same person, then the biography adds interesting circumstantial evidence to date the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting to before ca. 405 and certainly before 409. It helps to affirm a date established stylistically for the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting to ca. 400-410.

In this case, we can imagine that Tao-jung was studying and meditating in Cave 169 along with a group of other Chinese monks, as was the popular way for the training of monks at this time. Ping-ling ssu was already known as a place of mysterious spirits and unusual scenery in a remote area, very conducive to meditation practices. Also, we know that Tao-jung became a noted lecturer and commentator on the *Lotus Sutra* (he authored a commentary when he was at P'eng-ch'eng in the South), which, as discussed below in the conclusion section, was probably the text related to the Group 24 thousand Buddha panel. Considering all these matching elements, the Group 24 thousand Buddha panel would

<sup>20</sup> The exact date of Kumārajīva's death is not known. His biography in the *Kao-seng chuan* cites 405 or 409. Rhie (2002), p. 399. The CSTCC merely cites the I-hsi period of the Chin dynasty, that is, 405-419 A.D. Some scholars accept the 409 A.D. date (Tsukamoto), but Richard Robinson in *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, Madison, 1967, pp. 244-247, prefers a 413 A.D. date. Rhie (2002), p. 387 and note 285.

seem to date ca. 400-410. This in turn establishes further credibility for the opening of Cave 169 well before 424 (or 420).

### C. Iconography: Textual Considerations

The term “thousand Buddhas” is generally meant to refer to the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Hsien-chieh 賢劫), the present eon (kalpa).<sup>21</sup> An early record of the thousand Buddhas in Chinese art may be the reference in the biography of the monk Chu Tao-i 竺道壹 (322-402), which mentions his making of “a thousand precious images” in ca. 372 under the Eastern Chin in the South:

“... [Tao-] i then took out six items<sup>22</sup> that had been left at the temple. [Then he] made a thousand precious images. [Tao-] i already widely penetrated the inside and outside... 壹乃抽六物遺於寺。造金牒千像。壹既博通内外 ...<sup>23</sup>

These “thousand precious images” probably were the thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa. The characters “chin tieh 金牒” are a phrase meaning “precious” in old sutra writing, though it could perhaps also mean a “gold plate” or gilded relief sculpture in this instance.<sup>24</sup>

Mention of the Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa in Buddhist literature first appears in the early Pali canon, in the text of the *Dīghanikāya* (No. 14, the “Mahapadana Suttanta”)<sup>25</sup> in which Śākyamuni names and speaks about the six Buddhas who preceded him. The *Buddhavaṃsa*, a text of the Pali canon, probably written around the 2<sup>nd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., but with later interpolations (probably by ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), recounts the lives of 23 predecessors of Śākyamuni Buddha, beginning with Dipaṃkara Buddha. These include the first three Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa). Śākyamuni and Maitreya, the fourth and fifth Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, were also named at the end of verse 19 of Chapter XXVII.<sup>26</sup>

The thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa are mentioned in various texts translated in early Chinese Buddhist texts prior to ca. 425 A.D., including the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*), two early sutras which were also considered in our study of the Group 18 iconography of the ten-direction Buddhas in Chapter 4. The most extensive treatment of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa occurs in the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra*, translated into Chinese by Dharmakrakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) at Ch’ang-an in 300 (or 291 A.D.). Since this subject is a significant one for the early Buddhist art of China, especially with regard to the surviving cave temple art, and is

<sup>21</sup> There are various theories on the length of this kalpa: the one most cited says it is one eon of increase, then one eon of decrease, and so on until twenty eons, when it is finished.

<sup>22</sup> The six items or things personal to a monk: the three clothes (saṅghāṭi, uttarāsaṅghāṭi, and antara-vāsaka), the pātra (bowl), niṣidana (cloth for sitting or lying on), and the water strainer. Soothill (1937), p. 136.

<sup>23</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 6, *Daizōkyō*, 50 (T. 2059), p. 357b, 13-14.

<sup>24</sup> *Fo-chiao ta-tz’u tien*, p. 674. A. Soper translates this passage as a “golden plate of 1,000 images.” Soper (1957) pp. 18-19.

<sup>25</sup> *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, trans. and ed. by T. W. Rhys Davids, Vol. III, London, 1977, pp. 4-41. The *Dīghanikāya* is a collection of suttas in Pali. It can be noted that the *Dighāgama*, a collection of Sanskrit sutras, contains much of the same materials, but also has significant differences and additions. The *Dighāgama* is now available mostly in Chinese translations, though some original Sanskrit texts are known, such as some manuscripts found in the Gilgit hoard. (I am grateful to Prof. Stephen Teiser for his clarification regarding these texts).

<sup>26</sup> *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, Part III: *Chronicle of Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa)*, trans by I. B. Horner, London and Boston 1975, pp. 96-97. For further discussion of this *Buddhavaṃsa*, see below, Chapter 7, notes 142 and 143.

an important feature in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, some pertinent major texts translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425 will be briefly considered below.

1) *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (*Po-chou san-mei ching* 般舟三昧經) translated in 179 A.D., by Lokakṣema, in Loyang. (See Appendix II)

In Chapter VII (The Prediction) when the 500 assembled persons request the Buddha to let them be entrusted to the eight Bodhisattvas (led by the Bodhisattva Bhadrakalpa) who have vowed to preserve and keep this sutra after Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, the Buddha then speaks in verses about these 500 persons with respect to their future:

"...They shall plant many merits and cultivate the holy life—  
When they see Maitreya, such will their righteousness be 觀彌勒時義若此。

"Under those Buddhas who arise in this Bhadrakalpa 於是賢劫所興物，  
Radiating light out of love and compassion for the world，  
Everywhere, wherever they are, they will take up the Dharma，  
And serve the Buddhas of the past, future, and present 奉事去來賢在佛。

"They will all make offerings to the Heroes of the World;  
Seeing the Lords of the Three Ages 三世尊, they will be free of all the poisons;  
They shall quickly attain the noble Way of the Buddha 佛道，  
Which is inconceivable and incalculable..."<sup>27</sup>

In this sutra, which is among the earliest to be translated into Chinese, the Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa are already mentioned along with the Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future (also called the Buddhas of the Three Ages).

2) The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) translated in 286 A.D. by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) as the *Cheng fa-hua ching*; translated in 406 A.D. by Kumārajīva as the *Miao fa lien hua ching* (see Appendix II).

There appears to be only one specific mention of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa in the *Lotus Sutra*. It comes in Chapter 8, where the Buddha Śākyamuni gives the prediction of future Buddhahood to 500 of his disciples. The first disciple he speaks of is Pūrṇa, who, the Buddha says is the foremost teacher of the Dharma—under the past Buddhas, under the present Buddha Śākyamuni, and he will also be the foremost for each of the remaining thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (The Good Eon), and then he will become a Buddha with his own pure land, etc.

In Dharmarakṣa's translation (the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, 286 A.D.) the excerpt regarding the Bhadrakalpa is expressed as follows:

"... Now in our time, [Pūrṇa] is upholding the Dharma teaching 今於吾世爲尊法講. Every time [he] imparts correct text explanations and discusses [points] difficult to reach 每受正典論議(義)難及. Among the Bhadrakalpa's arising and appearing one-thousand Buddhas 賢劫之中興顯千佛, [he will] also at that time serve (kung-yang) the about-to-become World Honored One 又當供養將來世尊."<sup>28</sup>

In Kumārajīva's translation (the *Miao fa lien hua ching*, 406 A.D.) this passage is written:

<sup>27</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 55; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), p. 911c, 25-28.

<sup>28</sup> *Cheng fa-hua ching*, chüan 5, p'in 8, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), p. 95c, 17-19.

“... At the time of the Seven Buddhas, Pūrṇa (Fu-lou-na 富樓那) also was the best among those explaining the Dharma 富樓那亦於七佛說法人中而得第一. Now, with me [Śākyamuni], he is the best among those who explain the Dharma 今於我所說法人中亦爲第一. In the Bhadrakalpa at the time of the coming of the various Buddhas, he will be the best among men to teach the Dharma 於賢劫中當來諸佛說法人中亦得第一 ...”<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Dharmarakṣa translation specifically uses the phrase “ch’ien-fo” 千佛 (thousand Buddhas), but the Kumārajīva translation does not. In the Group 24 donor inscription the phrase thousand Buddhas (“ch’ien-fo” 千佛) is used twice.

3) *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* (*Hsien-chieh ching* 賢劫經), translated by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) in Western Chin 西晉 first year of Yüan-k’ang 元康 (300 A.D.) or the first year of Yung-k’ang 永康 (291 A.D.).<sup>30</sup> The translation was in 8 chüan (alternatively 7, 10 or 13 chüan).<sup>31</sup>

The *Ch’u san-tsang chi chi* (by Seng-yu, compiled in 512-518), besides having a record (from Tao-an’s catalogue, ca. 370’s) in chüan 2 that the text was translated by Chu Fa-hu, in chüan 7 there is a record of this sutra being translated by Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) from a text obtained from a Chi-pin 罽賓 (Gandhāran or Kashmiri) monk (竺法護從罽賓沙門得是賢劫經).<sup>32</sup> Kumārajīva translated this same sutra in Ch’ang-an (during the reign of Yao Hsing of the Later Ch’in) between ca. 402 and 412 as the *Hsin Hsien-chieh ching* 新賢劫經 in 7 chüan, but this text no longer exists.<sup>33</sup> Fragments of the *Hsien-chien ching* text have been found in Central Asia.

In the *Hsien-chieh ching*, chüan 7, the names of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa are listed in order of their appearance and details concerning the names of their parents, the names of the Buddha’s attendants, the greatest disciples, the life span, number of people who will be liberated, etc. of each of these Buddhas is written. In this sutra, the first Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa who have already come are:

Krakucchanda (Chü-liu-hsün 拘留孫),

Kanakamuni (Chü-na-han-mu-ni 拘那含牟尼),

Kaśyapa (Chia-yeh 迦葉),

Śākyamuni (Shih-chia-wen 釋迦文);

Maitreya will be the next (he is called Tz’u-shih 慈氏).

All the subsequent Buddhas are presented up to the last of the thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa, who is Rucika (Lou-chih 樓至).<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the *Hsien-chieh ching*, which speaks of the thousand Buddhas of the Present Kalpa (Bhadrakalpa), there are other texts that specifically speak of the thousand Buddhas of the Past Kalpa and the thousand Buddhas of the Future Kalpa. Further, there are the Buddha name sutras and others dealing with this subject, which is very complicated and has quite a few variations.

<sup>29</sup> *Miao fa lien hua ching*, chüan 4, p’in 8, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 264), p. 162b, 3-5.

<sup>30</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14 (T 425), pp. 1-65.

<sup>31</sup> *BD*, p. 941c; Tsukamoto (1985), p. 210; *The Korean Buddhist Canon*, compiled by Lewis Lancaster in collaboration with Sung-bae Park, Berkeley, 1979, p. 136 (No. 387). Cited here as Korean Catalogue.

<sup>32</sup> *CSTCC*, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T. 2145), chüan 2, p. 7b; chüan 7, p. 48c, line 4.

<sup>33</sup> *CSTCC*, chüan 2, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 10c; *BD*, p. 942a.

<sup>34</sup> *Hsien-chieh ching*, chüan 7, p’in 21, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 435), p. 50ff.

4) *Ta chih-tu lun* 大智度論 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra*), translated by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an under the Later Ch'in and completed 406 A.D., in 100 chüan.<sup>35</sup> In chüan 38 it says "that 1,000, 10,000 kalpas in the past there were no Buddhas, but in this kalpa 1,000 Buddhas will arise and beings will be happy, so it is named the "Excellent (good or virtuous) Kalpa".<sup>36</sup>

5) *Ch'ien-fo yin yüan ching* 千佛因緣經 (Thousand Buddha Causation Sutra), one chüan (rest is lost), translated by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an between 402-412 A.D.<sup>37</sup>

This sutra only survives in one chüan. It presents the story of the cause of the thousand Buddhas of this kalpa. It says that Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kaśyapa and Śākyamuni have already come, and that Buddhas will follow subsequently up to Rucika (Lou-chih 樓至), the last of the thousand Buddhas of the present kalpa. It states that these are the thousand Buddhas who are appearing during this kalpa.<sup>38</sup>

6) *Ch'ang a-han ching* 長阿含經 (*Dirghāgama*), 22 chüan, translated in 413 (Later Ch'in) in Ch'ang-an by Buddhayaśas and Chu Fo-nien 竺佛念.<sup>39</sup> In the first chüan it says:

"... During this present kalpa there has been a Buddha named Krakucchanda. Also [one] named Kanakamuni. Also [one] named Kaśyapa. I [Śākyamuni] now also in this Bhadrakalpa established supreme perfect Enlightenment ... 此賢劫中有佛名拘樓孫. 又名拘那含. 又名迦葉. 我今亦於賢劫中成最正覺..."<sup>40</sup>

7) *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經, 10 chüan, translated by Buddhahadra (probably ca. 412-420) in Chien-k'ang under Eastern Chin in the South. In chüan 9, "Visualizing Images", there is a reference to the thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa:

"... In the future ages, because of the advantage of the mind's recollection, [the person who visualized the thousand Buddhas in this world] will meet the thousand World-Honored Ones (i.e., Buddhas) of this Bhadrakalpa ... 於未來世心想利故遇賢劫千佛世尊..."<sup>41</sup>

The *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* is a major visualization sutra translated in a period when meditation and visualization was of special prominence in China, especially in North China. In this text it is clear that visualization of the thousand Buddhas would even extend from the thousand Buddhas of this eon to the thousand Buddhas of the Past and of the Future as well.

These examples are but a few of the many citations to the thousand Buddhas, which also appear in variants such as the thousand Buddhas of the Three Ages (Past, Present and Future) or of the three thousand great one thousand Buddha lands filled with Buddhas of the ten-directions. We will return to this iconography again in Chapters 8 and 9. From this summary it can be seen that there are difficulties in resolving the exact identity or textual source of the various thousand Buddhas without having other

<sup>35</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 25, (T 1509), pp. 57c-756c.

<sup>36</sup> *BD*, p. 940b.

<sup>37</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 426), pp. 65-72.

<sup>38</sup> *BD*, p. 940c.

<sup>39</sup> Korean Catalogue, p. 212 (No. 647).

<sup>40</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 1, (T 1), p. 1, 23-25.

<sup>41</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 643), p. 691b, 23.



definite clues, such as inscriptions.<sup>42</sup>

#### D. Conclusions: Dating and Issues of Identification

The Group 24 wall paintings are certainly one of China's earliest known examples of the thousand Buddhas. The wall paintings of the thousand Buddhas and the three embedded panels a), b) and c) are seen to be earlier than the wall paintings of the Group 6 niche dated 424 (or 420) and those of Groups 11 and 13 of ca. 425, all on the North Wall. Many features relate to the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century paintings and sculptures of Central Asia, especially from sites on the Northern Silk Road. There are also some factors which relate to images from Western Central Asia (Fayaz-tepe) and from the Amarāvati/Nāgārjunakoṇḍa schools of South India of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries. The *Kao-seng chuan* biography of the monk Tao-jung, probably the same Tao-jung in the Group 24 donor inscription of the thousand Buddha painting, provides information that suggests that this wall painting could date before ca. 405, as discussed in section I.B.3. A dating ca. 400-410 A.D. appears reasonable in light of the stylistic associations and the possible historical evidence of the Tao-jung biography.

At least some of the major texts translated into Chinese before ca. 425 show a pervasive presence of the thousand Buddhas within the context of the larger narrative of these texts. However, in considering a possible textual source for the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting, there is a degree of complexity in determining the exact identity of the source. One possible category is the representation of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Good Eon), which is our present eon in which Śākyamuni is the fourth Buddha. References to the Bhadrakalpa thousand Buddhas appear in texts such as the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (both in the Dharmarakṣa and Kumārajīva translations of 286 and 406 respectively), and in the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra*, of which there were various translations, the first by Dharmarakṣa in 300 (or 291), where the names and details of each of the thousand Buddhas appear. Some texts translated by Kumārajīva between 402-ca. 412 and the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* possibly translated by Buddhahadra between ca. 411-420 also have reference to the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa as a group. However, in most of these texts, there are also citations of the thousand Buddhas of the Three Times and to the three thousand great

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<sup>42</sup> A study of the thousand Buddhas in the art of the Chinese cave temples of the Northern Dynasties by Ho Shih-che 賀世哲 goes into some of the issues of texts and identification with respect to the remains of the thousand Buddha images in early Chinese Buddhist cave temples. He particularly notes the importance of inscriptions in trying to understand the particular interpretation of any given representation of the thousand Buddhas, because there are many possible variants and identifications and quite a number of texts that deal with the subject. He lists some of the current opinions in the academic world concerning this problem and groups them as follows: 1) the most popular designation is the Hsien-chieh ch'ien fo (the thousand Buddhas of the Present Kalpa); 2) the designation of the Past, Present and Future 3,000 Buddhas; 3) the Past, Present, Future Three Times Buddhas and the ten-direction Buddhas which are the transformation bodies of Śākyamuni as in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*); 4) the opinion of S. Mizuno and T. Nagahiro with respect to Yün-kang, in which they suggest that the thousand Buddhas that surround a Śākyamuni and Prabhūtarana niche (which are many at Yün-kang), are the ten-direction Buddhas of Śākyamuni's transformation bodies, but that the thousand Buddhas surrounding a single sitting Buddha niche are the thousand Buddhas of the Present Kalpa (Hsien-chieh ch'ien fo); 5) there are also the thirty-five and the fifty-three Buddhas, which are sometimes combined to make a panel of 88 Buddhas; 6) in Tun-huang Cave 254 (Northern Wei, ca. 570's) surviving inscriptions with each individual image of the thousand Buddhas reveal that this cave has a combination of names from the Buddhas of the present kalpa, past kalpa and future kalpa. Ho Shih-ch'e, "Various Problems Concerning Thousand Buddha Iconography in Northern Dynasties Stone Caves" (in Japanese), translated by Yagi Haruo, *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, No. 193, (November, 1990), pp. 91-117; see especially p. 96.

thousand Buddhas. Such references suggest an extension of the idea of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa to the thousand Buddhas of the Past and Future as well.

With regard to the depiction in art, there is some ambiguity in exactly which representation of the thousand Buddhas is being depicted (though it may not make much difference). Also, in many instances, as with the Group 24 painting, there is the added component of the embedded panels within the field of the thousand Buddhas, and it is likely that these panels have a relationship with the thousand Buddhas. On the other hand, some thousand Buddha panels consist only, or primarily, of the field of dhyānāsana Buddhas representing the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (or three thousand Buddhas, that is, the thousand Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future). Examples such as the thousand Buddha panels of Groups 15 and 19 in Cave 169 may fall in this category of representation. More often, however, the field of thousand Buddhas is accompanied by other iconographic panels that are embedded within the thousand Buddha field and that probably have a pertinent meaning in the totality of the scheme being represented.<sup>43</sup>

In the case of the Group 24 painting, we know from the donor inscription that it is considered a representation of the “thousand Buddhas,” specifically called “ch’ien-fo 千佛,” each one of whom the donors wish to honor and respect. This would seem to suggest that they are the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa and that the donors wish to serve all the thousand Buddhas throughout this eon. Maitreya is also mentioned in the inscription and the (apparent) aspiration to be present at the assemblies of Maitreya is indicated, though the inscription is very fragmentary in that section. What is of particular importance in the Group 24 wall painting is the presence of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the seven jewel stupa as one of the three embedded panels. This factor is a strong factor that could tie the overall iconography of the Group 24 painting to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) and thereby suggest that the other two panels are also related to this sutra, as well as the thousand Buddhas. In that case, the thousand Buddhas may refer to Chapter 8 of the *Lotus Sutra*, that is, the prediction regarding the monk Pūrṇa, rather than to Chapter 11, where the myriad ten-direction Buddhas are the transformed bodies of Śākyamuni and do not specifically reference the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, who are individually distinct Buddhas to appear in this eon. However, even in Chapter 11, the three thousand Buddhas of the great thousand Buddha lands are mentioned in the opening passage in describing the appearance of the seven jeweled stupa:

“... Incense burners and treasure bottles were filled with precious incense 香鑪(鑪?)寶瓶滿中名香, and sandalwood fragrances completely suffused into the 3,000 great 1,000 Buddha lands 栴檀芬馨一切普動(重)三千大千佛之國土...” (from Dharmarakṣa’s translation, the *Cheng fa-hua ching*).

The term “three thousand great thousand Buddha Lands” likely refers to each Buddha Land which is within every one of the three thousand great thousand worlds. Perhaps, though less likely, it could refer to the Buddha Lands in each of the Three Ages (Past, Present and Future), a phrase which could match with the representation of the Group 24 painting, which could well suggest the thousand Buddhas in each of the Three Ages. There is, however, a further point to consider: the Kumārajīva translation of the *Lotus Sutra* (the *Miao fa lien hua ching*) does not contain this phrase of the “three thousand great

<sup>43</sup> It of interest to note that the thousand Buddhas in the art of India, Gandhāra, and Central Asia are difficult to see at this date. Examples may appear at Bāmiyān and are known at Toyuk Caves in Turfan (discussed in a subsequent volume), as well as in other cave sites in Kansu (to appear in Vol. IV of this series). There may be some relation to the repeating multiple sets of Buddhas, especially as seen on stupas, an issue which is addressed in Chapter 8 below.

thousand Buddha Lands.” Rather it says: “... At that time there appeared before the Buddha a seven-jeweled stupa, five hundred yojanas in height and two hundred and fifty yojanas both in length and width, which emerged from the ground and hovered in the air. It was adorned with various jewels, had five thousand railings and thousands of myriads of chambers. It was decorated with innumerable flags and banners and hanging jeweled necklaces, and myriads of koṭis of jeweled bells hung from the top. The fragrance of the tamāla leaves and sandalwood trees exuded from all sides of the stupa, covering the world. The banners and umbrellas were composed of the seven jewels such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother of pearl, agate, pearls and rubies; and they rose as high as the palaces of the world-protectors of the four quarters ...”<sup>44</sup>

In Chapter 4 it was suggested that the Group 18 sculptures on the West Wall were probably the representation of Śākyamuni and the ten-direction Buddhas and that the textual reference was the Dharmarakṣa translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, namely the *Cheng fa-hua ching* translated in 286 A.D., rather than the Kumārajīva translation, the *Miao fa lien hua ching* of 406 A.D. There is one very interesting factor which further suggests that the Group 24 painting draws specifically from the *Cheng fa-hua ching*. That is, in panel c) of Śākyamuni seated together with Prabhūtaratna in the seven jewel stupa (Figs. 5.14a, b), the two Buddhas appear to be sitting with legs pendant. The painting is quite worn out in the lower area, so the position of the legs is not entirely clear, though there is no indication that the legs are crossed on the top of the seat (in padmāsana or vajrāsana). In Dharmarakṣa’s translation it does not state how the two Buddhas are seated, but in Kumārajīva’s translation it is specifically stated that Śākyamuni Buddha went into the stupa and sat cross-legged (chieh-chia fu-tso 結加趺坐) on half of the throne (seat):

“... At that time Śākyamuni Buddha entered the stupa and sat cross-legged on half of the seat 即時釋迦牟尼佛. 入其塔中. 坐其半座結加趺坐...”<sup>45</sup>

Another painting of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated together in the seven jewel stupa in Group 11 of ca. 425 on the North Wall of Cave 169 also shows both Buddhas seated with legs pendant (Figs. 5.15a, b). This seems to be the tradition for the representation of the two Buddhas in the seven jewel stupa in the Cave 169 wall paintings, and it may indicate that they are all following an artistic tradition based on the text of Dharmarakṣa (which is non-specific as to the sitting position, so it would depend on some prototype or on the decision of the makers), rather than on the text of Kumārajīva which specifies the sitting position cross-legged on the seat, and which is the standard in Chinese art thereafter. It should be noted, however, that the characters Shih-chia-mou-ni-fo in the Group 24 colophon are those used in Kumārajīva’s translations (Dharmarakṣa used Shih-chia-wen-fo). The examples in Cave 169, to the best of my knowledge, are the only ones in Chinese art that show the two Buddhas seated with both legs pendant, though there are some that show the two Buddhas in the lalitāsana (one leg up and one leg down).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 179.

<sup>45</sup> *Miao fa lien hua ching*, chüan 4 (Chapter 11), *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 264), p. 168, 16-17. Burton Watson translates this passage as follows: “...Shakyamuni Buddha at once entered the tower and took half of the seat, seating himself in cross-legged position...” Watson (1993), p. 176. Kubo and Yuyama translate this passage as: “...The Buddha Śākyamuni immediately entered the stupa and sat cross-legged on half of the seat...” Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 185. Leon Hurvitz translate the same passage as: “...At that very moment Śākyamunibuddha, entering that stūpa, sat on half that seat, his legs crossed...” Hurvitz (1976), p. 188.

<sup>46</sup> This is the famous gilt bronze sculpture in the Musée Guimet dated 518 A.D. Also see the example in Tun-huang Cave 259 in Fig. 7.54.

The fact that Tao-jung is known to have been an expert on the *Lotus Sutra* and was one of the donors of this Group 24 painting can also be supporting evidence that this painting is based, at least in part if not entirely, on the *Lotus Sutra*, and probably the text as translated by Dharmarakṣa, the *Cheng fa-hua ching*. Since the donor inscription also mentions the coming of Maitreya, it is also possible that embedded panel b), the “teaching Buddha” panel, could be Maitreya. This would indicate Future, whereas the Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna panel could represent the Past. The embedded panel a) could, in that case, represent the Present with Śākyamuni and two monks. It is, however, also possible that the Future is represented by the dhyanāsana Buddha (it could be Maitreya with two monks, especially since Maitreya is considered so importantly as a teacher by monks in China at this time),<sup>47</sup> the present by the preaching Buddha (possibly Śākyamuni at the Vulture Peak), and the Past by the two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna. From the clear differences of iconography and their sequence of placement in the upper, middle and lower areas (left to right), it may be that they represent the Present, Future and Past, together with the thousand Buddhas, which could be either the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa or the thousand Buddhas of each of the Past, Present and Future kalpas.

In the *Lotus Sutra* the two Buddhas of Chapter 11 represent the Mahāyānist idea that a Buddha of the remote past, Prabhūtaratna, returns in the present and future whenever the *Lotus Sutra* is taught, so it also represents the Ekayāna (One Vehicle) teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. This shows the immanence of the Buddhas in all times and that Nirvāṇa is not extinction. It is of some note that there is no definitely definable image of Maitreya Bodhisattva here. This is different from the later juxtaposition of the two-Buddha stupa niche along with the cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya—a common theme in the caves at Yün-kang at least from the 480's. This is an evolving iconography in China, and the presence of Maitreya Bodhisattva together with the Buddha pair in a single unit seems to appear in art around the first or second decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is important to note that panels embedded in the thousand Buddha field is a pervasive form in Chinese Buddhist art from this time on and in many cases is associated with the *Lotus Sutra*. It is particularly prominent in the five T'an-yao colossal images caves at Yün-kang (Caves 16-20) in northeast China under the Northern Wei.

In conclusion, the Group 24 painting appears to be the thousand Buddhas as connected with the *Lotus Sutra*, primarily because of the representation of the jewel stupa of Prabhūtaratna and the two Buddhas seated inside. The thousand Buddhas in this case would either refer to the opening passage of Chapter 11, and could be linked with the West Wall Group 18 sequence, or they could refer to the Chapter 8 reference to the Bhadrakalpa and the connection with the prediction of enlightenment, which would conceivably be of interest to the donors of Group 24, who were all monks (and maybe some nuns). Determining whether the Group 24 thousand Buddhas would appear to be generic or specifically referring to the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa is difficult to determine at this point. However, it does appear likely to be linked more to the *Lotus Sutra* than to the *Hsien-chieh ching* (*Bhadrakalpika Sūtra*). Since the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* (*Hsien-chieh ching*) does not seem to offer the basis for the three embedded panels in the Group 24 painting, we can suggest at this stage that Group 24 most likely draws its inspiration from the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*).<sup>48</sup> Though it

<sup>47</sup> The dhyanāsana Buddha could be Maitreya accompanied by two standing monks, which would be reasonable considering the popularity of Maitreya among monks in China at this time. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's bronze dhyanāsana Buddha probably dated 426 (Fig. 6.9d) is inscribed as Maitreya, so Maitreya may well have been represented in a meditation pose in this early period.

<sup>48</sup> Eugene Wang discusses the significance of the two Buddhas and “Many Treasures Stupa” in the context of searching for the reasons for the popularity of this image from the *Lotus Sutra* in China. He presents the image of the east wall 1,000

is also possible that the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* could be combined with the *Lotus Sutra* in the Group 24 painting, it would seem that the *Lotus Sutra* alone can also provide the basis for the entire panel.

## II. SOUTH (LEFT) WALL

The South Wall is a difficult surface area with a steep slope (Figs. 5.1, 5.2). Judging from the numerous holes for wooden posts, it once had extensive imagery on it, but now there are only a few remaining sculptures and paintings. These fall into three general levels: upper (Group 23), a wide middle area (Groups 22 and 21), and a lower area (Group 20). If one takes into account the surviving works and the arrangement of holes, it is clear that originally there was a magnificent array of images in multiple rows, one behind and above the other. It is difficult to surmise now what the iconographic scheme may have been, but the few remaining sculptures and paintings suggest there may have been rows of seated Buddha images in both the upper and lower sections, and in the wide middle section there may have been a row of standing Buddha triads and several rows of dhyānāsana Buddhas. There was clearly some regularity to the scheme, but with a variety of configurations.

The sculptures from this wall are important, relatively large, and artistically high quality survivors among early Chinese Buddhist art. Since they are mostly in clay, we are fortunate that even these, few as they may be compared with the original, still remain today. Each group will be individually discussed starting from the uppermost level and moving down, from Group 23, to Group 22 and finally to Group 20 at the bottom.

### A. Upper Zone: Group 23

Originally this area, designated as Group 23 (Fig. 5.2), appears to have been one long horizontal zone made in large part by artificial means using wooden posts and the clay wall screen method together with part of the natural wall surface in the upper part (Fig. 5.18). Group 23 comprises the broken stone relief of a large dhyānāsana Buddha near the entrance, a frieze of wall paintings of domed stupas, and, just below the wall paintings, five life size dhyānāsana clay Buddha sculptures.

#### 1. Large Stone Relief Seated Buddha

At the far left (facing), high up near the ceiling and the gaping entrance opening, are the remains of a rather large Buddha carved in high relief from the living rock (Fig. 5.19). It is now the only stone carved image on the entire South Wall. Clearly parts below and to the Buddha's right cracked off when part of the rock wall of this area collapsed. The size of this Buddha is larger and its position higher than the five clay Buddhas of Group 23, so it most likely did not belong to that configuration (Figs.

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Buddha panel of Cave 169 as though it were a vision seen as one faces the east and the rising sun through the entrance, with the 1,000 Buddhas heralding the coming of the Many Treasures Stupa. He describes this panel as the oldest representation of the *Lotus Sutra* in Chinese art. Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China*, Seattle, 2005, pp. 13-23. He does not, however, address the details of the dating problems, but generally appears to date most images in Cave 169 date to ca. 412-427 (note 17, p. 400). Nor does he discuss the presence of the other two individual panels in the field of the thousand Buddha painting. If the panel dates ca. 400 as discussed above, then it is certainly one of the oldest surviving painted thousand Buddha representations, but as the oldest *Lotus Sutra* representation, it may have to share that with the West Wall Group 18 ten-direction Buddhas, who, as shown in Chapter 4, are likely to be the ten-direction transformation Buddhas of Śākyamuni Buddha as expressed many times in Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra*.



5.2, 5.18). Like the stone core images of Group 18 in the upper part of the West (rear) Wall (Figs. 4.3, 4.4), it is carved in relief from the living stone in a shallow concave depression that is basically the mandorla and acts as a kind of niche. The head is quite well finished; the body part, such that remains, is summarily carved and was probably covered in thin clay and painted with the desired detail. The lower part, which is now missing, has five holes undoubtedly for affixing the legs and arms, probably for repair with clay, possibly after part of the wall collapsed, or it may have been fashioned that way originally (in that case being an image only partly of stone core). From the position of the arms and holes, it is probable that the image was in *dhyānāsana*. Part of the original cowl (fold around the neck) of the *saṅghāṭi* that was carved in stone still remains on the right shoulder, so it was clearly an image with both shoulders covered (Fig. 5.20). The cowl has a slightly raised, flat, plain, semi-circular surface. This kind of flat, semi-circular cowl appears on many small bronze seated Buddhas of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and early 5<sup>th</sup> century, studied in Vol. II as late Phase II and Phase III images (Figs. 2.1, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.10, 2.11). The neck has a pronounced, widening slope towards the collar bone, a shape similar to the West Wall Group 18 large standing stone Buddha sculpture (Fig. 4.7).

The head is fairly well preserved in the South Wall stone Buddha. It is a wide, nearly square shape, but a little long, with full cheeks, slightly bulging eyes and wide lips, features that are a little different from those of the West Wall standing Group 18 Buddha in Fig. 4.7, but very close to the features of the large *Bodhisattva* of Group 17 (Fig. 4.27). The *uṣṇīṣa* is quite narrow and tall and resembles that seen in the seated bronze *dhyānāsana* Buddha formerly in the Nitta collection (now at the Palace Museum in Taipei) in Fig. 2.5, dated in Vol. II to ca. last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Such a tall *uṣṇīṣa* is also seen in the clay Buddha from Ak-terek (near Khotan on the Southern Silk Road) of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>49</sup>

Stylistically, the large stone Buddha of Group 23 is not precisely comparable to other images in this cave, but may be thought to date close to the West (rear) Wall stone core images of Group 18 primarily on the grounds of the similar technique and mandorla-niche style. In the chunky and forceful shape of the head, there is a relation with the style not only of the Group 17 *Bodhisattva* in Fig. 4.27, but also of the bronze *abhayā mudrā* Buddha in Fig. 4.19 and the Asian Art Museum bronze standing *Bodhisattva* of ca. 400 A.D. in Fig. 4.35. In the wide and rather square set of the shoulders and broad upper body in general, the image quite closely resembles the body form of the Ching-ch'uan bronze Buddha discussed in Chapter 1 as dating ca. 400 (Fig. 2.1e) and the bronze Buddha from I-hsien, Hopei in Fig. 4.10, which was dated in Vol. II to ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century, probably a date to which this Group 23 stone Buddha torso can relate. It is a powerful and probably nearly a colossal size image made of the early technique of "stone core."<sup>50</sup>

Remnants of the mandorla reveal a rather large circular head halo with an outer band of green, red, black and tan clay-color, large, stylized flame patterns and an inner band of seated Buddha images around the plain red circular center (Fig. 5.20). The design of the outer flame pattern is bold and simple with alternating green and tan (clay) colors against a dark red background that offsets each discrete flame design. Each flame has a curved base or root and a somewhat jagged crescent shaped body (Fig. 5.21). The inner space (background) of each flame (painted in dark red) is like a long-tailed comma and the upper arm of each flame consequently has a jagged lower edge. It does not have the three pronged "honeysuckle leaf" shape of the halo of the Group 22 Buddha (Fig. 5.45). Although there

<sup>49</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 317 and fig. 4.84a.

<sup>50</sup> See chapter 3, section II.A.1. regarding the "stone core" technique.



is some similarity in the design, it is not as complex as the outer flame pattern of the halo of the seated left Buddha of Group 14 on the North Wall (Fig. 7.47), which is probably of later date (see below). A flame pattern similar to that of the Group 23 stone relief Buddha is more elaborately treated in the outer rim of the mandorla of the right (facing) standing Buddha of Group 9 on the North Wall (Fig. 7.25a) and the best preserved Buddha of Group 7 (Fig. 7.16c), both dated below in Chapter 7 to around the mid-420s. The mandorla pattern of this large stone seated Buddha of Group 23 is important in tracing the development in China of the so-called “flame” halo and will be studied further in relation to other halo designs presented in various examples below.

Directly above the shoulders of the stone Buddha is a triangular area with a jagged flame pattern in red and outlined in white. It appears rather delicate in design with narrow spears of flame. Several bands of the body halo portion are barely visible; it had an outer rim of elaborate green stylized flames and an inner band of seated dhyānāsana Buddhas, much like the design of the head halo. A row of small white circles (pearls) separate the various bands within both the head and body halos; the ones near the Buddha’s right shoulder and around the innermost red circle behind the Buddha’s head are most clearly preserved. The colors used in this obviously handsome halo seem to be black, white, red and green. Considering that this image appears to date ca. 400 and the mandorla painting appears to be original, this mandorla is an important early example of the elaborate halo designs evolving in China in this period.

To the right (facing) of the stone Buddha the wall takes a right angled turn (Fig. 5.19). On the perpendicular surface is the remnant of a wall painting of a standing figure in black robes with a circular halo. Except for the portion above the hip and below the eyebrows, the figure is lost, so it is difficult to identify. Because of the halo it could be a Bodhisattva or Buddha, but it is more likely to be a monk in black robes. It faces the direction of the large seated stone Buddha, but it is not clear if it belongs with the Buddha configuration or not.

## 2. *Row of Painted Stupas*

At the right of the painted figure in black, the wall takes another right-angled turn (Figs. 5.18, 5.19). Near the entrance, this part of the wall stretches over to join the projection of the East Wall containing the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting (Fig. 5.1). In the upper part of the South Wall that stretches towards the rear wall, there was apparently a long painted frieze of stupas. The remains of five stupas in Indian style can still be seen: a tiny portion of the curved dome at the far left (facing) in the corner near the black robed figure, and four others, more completely preserved, in the central portion of the wall (Figs. 5.1, 5.18). Fig. 5.22 shows a detail of the two at the far right, and the drawings in Figs. 5.23i, ii shows the designs of the four best preserved ones.<sup>51</sup>

These extremely rare and remarkable painted stupas have a tall, plain base with a beveled upper edge from which springs the high dome. The base is likely to be square (Fig. 5.23ii) rather than circular, but it is not possible to be sure. The domes have a pronounced verticality and hemispherical top, which lend the dome shape a parabolic outline. In overall shape and proportioning, the base and dome sections rather closely resemble the small miniature stupa in Fig. 5.24a, which has a circular drum section that is flush with the contours of the dome and sits on a square base. The same basic shape occurs in

<sup>51</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Teng Yü-hsiang for allowing me to make these drawings from the drawings he was preparing in the summer of 1992 in preparation for his book on Ping-ling ssu Cave 169: Teng (1994).

the large Southwest Stupa of the Eastern Site at Subashi, Kucha (Fig. 5.24b), which has a large, high square base with a parabolic shaped drum/dome unit rising directly from the square base that imparts the tall, cylindrical appearance typical of some of the Central Asian stupas. This Southwest Stupa was discussed in Vol. II. as being an early stupa in Kucha, possibly dating as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> and no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.<sup>52</sup>

The domes of the Group 23 painted stupas are covered with designs in 6, 7 or 8 horizontal friezes. There is some variety in the designs of the four best preserved ones, but they all seem to have had a frieze of plain, pointed, upturned lotus petal or leaf design at the bottom of the dome and a longer, narrower, down-turned lotus petal design over the top of the dome (Fig. 5.23i, ii). Filling the levels between are four, five or six rows of geometric patterns in differing order among the stupas. These patterns, some of which are repeated, include: 1) a row of doughnut-like circles, each with a small inner circle of lighter tone; 2) a running slanted angle design resembling dentils; 3) a “twisted rope” design (see below for more discussion of this design); and 4) a running design of triangles with alternating direction of the apex and each with a smaller inner triangle of lighter tone (Figs. 5.22, 5.23i, ii).

The appearance of the lotus over the top of the dome is a feature known in Gandhāran art, as in the famous miniature stone stupa from Loṛiyān Tāngai (Fig. 5.25a), though its lotus petals are of a different shape. Friezes of geometric patterns also frequently occur in the Gandhāran architectural reliefs, such as the one in Fig. 5.25b, now in the museum at Lahore. This elaborately adorned structure shows a frieze of slanted angle designs as well as the familiar railing motifs and garland bearers. However, some of the patterns which do not seem common in Gandhāran art but appear in the Group 23 stupas can be seen in some Central Asian and even Roman art. For example, the doughnut (circle within circle) design is well known in the wall paintings of Kizil, including in Cave 38, which has already been discussed as dating ca. mid or third quarter of the 4th century (Fig. 5.25c). The twisted rope design is an ancient design from Mesopotamia (where it was twisted snakes) and is utilized with frequency in Roman mosaic art. It also occurs in the frame of the paintings in the so-called Room of the Frescoes near Temple (C) of the Western Site at Subashi (Kucha), dated in Vol. II to ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> This same design occurs in the halos of the two right Buddhas of Group 23 in Cave 169 (Fig. 5.39) and in a number of images up to the later decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (discussed in more detail below with the Group 23 two Buddhas). The “dentil type” overlapping angle with double striation on the underside could be related to similar designs, such as occur on the rug on the pedestal of the Kharaoṣṭhi inscription bronze Buddha in Fig. 2.4, dated in Vol. II to ca. 375.

Above the dome of each stupa there were apparently three projecting masts or umbrella poles (yaṣṭi) springing from a small circular base (Fig. 5.23i, ii). There may have been 5 or 7 levels of umbrellas (chattras) in each of these three masts. At the top of each is a circular shape with a scalloped edge, possibly a jewel finial. The triple mast form is unusual, but is known in some other cases. Examples of three umbrella masts appear at least three other times in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 in the paintings of the Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna stupa (from chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*): in Group 24 (East Wall) of ca. 400, and in the North Wall Groups 11 and 13 of ca. 425 (Figs. 5.14a, 5.15a, 7.26, 7.34 and 7.43). However, the Group 24, 11 and 13 examples are somewhat different in representation: the supports for the chattras (umbrellas) make a “W” design similar to the commonly used auspicious symbol motif known as the “nandyāvartsa” and frequently seen in early Indian art (see Chapter 5,

<sup>52</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 641-643.

<sup>53</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.43e.

note 13). Perhaps the triple mast style evolves from reference to the auspicious “nandīvārtsa”, or it could also refer to either the triratna (Three Jewels) or to the triśula (trident). This is not yet entirely clear. There are examples of several or even multiple umbrellas projecting and even hanging from the harmikā top of the main stupa in the stupa reliefs of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa dating from as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Fig. 5.26a). Also, in Cave 38 at Kizil of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there is a somewhat comparable example in that there are small, umbrella-like elements projecting from the sides of the finial at the top of the main mast (Fig. 5.26b).<sup>54</sup> Though in the Cave 38 case the side elements are small and perhaps decorative and not equal to the main mast, the idea of projecting elements of a mast-umbrella shape could be similar to the representation in the Group 23 stupas.

Interestingly, though the masts of the Group 23 row of painted stupas are somewhat different from the other examples in Cave 169 of the Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna pagoda, the usage of the mast/umbrella feature is very similar to a few stupa reliefs at the Yün-kang caves from the time of the 480's, as seen in Cave 6 and in one case in Cave 11 (Figs. 5.27a, b). The major difference is that the Cave 169 Group 23 painted stupas are the Indian/Central Asian form of stupa whereas those in Yün-kang are the Chinese storied tower type of stupa with the three-pronged masts appearing at the very top of tall, multi-storied structure as in Cave 6 (Fig. 5.27a) or as the representation of the stupa of Prabhūtaratna in Cave 11 (Fig. 5.27b). Possibly the Yün-kang stupas assimilated elements from earlier versions of stupas from Chinese Buddhist art, such as the examples we see in Group 23 in Cave 169. This would not be the only case of elements seen in Cave 169 showing up later in the Yün-kang cave, as will be discussed in later volumes of this series. Whether or not there is some special designation connected with this form of the triple mast/umbrellas is presently hard to determine, but at least in a few cases it is associated with the *Lotus Sutra*.

Between the two left (facing) stupas of the central group (Fig. 5.22) there is a floating three-petal white lotus bud with red inner lobes.<sup>55</sup> Another object floats in the space above it. This is likely to be a jewel form, related to the flaming jewels depicted in early Kizil and Turfan art, though different in shape. It does not have the cubic shapes of those, which are known in Kizil Cave 38 (Fig. 5.28) of ca. mid 4<sup>th</sup> century and Cave 47 of ca. last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The background behind the Group 23 stupas is white and the stupas and objects in space are outlined in an even black line.

These painted stupa representations of Group 23 are quite extraordinary remains in early Chinese Buddhist art. The form of the stupas, probably with a square base and vertically extended base/dome unit, is clearly related to Gandhāran style stupas, as seen in the large scale and in the reliquary stupas from Swat and Gandhāra, as well as in one of the earliest of the stupas of the Kucha region—the great Southwest Stupa from the Eastern Site at Subashi, probably of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. (Fig. 5.24b). It is likely that this row of painted stupas represents an early example in this cave, around the time of the large stone Buddha torso of Group 23 and the Group 18 images of the West Wall. They are a rare depiction of the Gandhāran and early Central Asian type in Chinese art without the modifications generally seen in Chinese stupa representations after the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, including those at Yün-kang. However, with regard to the triple mast representation, it is very similar to those used in the Yün-kang relief stupas from the 480's; it is perhaps different from the “W” shape mast of Indian variety seen in the Cave 169 paintings of the Stupa of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in Groups 24, 11 and 13.

<sup>54</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.53a.

<sup>55</sup> Possibly these are stamens or pistils—the appearance is like a small petal shape.

Originally it seems there were at least seven stupas painted across the top level. Although it might have been possible to have ten, it is likely that there were seven or eight. If there were seven, more than likely they would represent the seven Buddhas, a relatively popular theme in early Buddhist art in India, Gandhāra and in early Chinese Buddhist art of the South.<sup>56</sup> In early Indian art, such as at Bharhut (ca. 180 B.C.) and Sāñcī (in the gateways of ca. 50 B.C.), the seven Buddhas were represented by seven stupas. The seven Buddhas are: Vipasyin, Śikhin, Viśabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni. The first three are the last three Buddhas of the previous eon and the four from Krakucchanda to Śākyamuni are the first four Buddhas of the present eon (Bhadrakalpa). References to the seven Buddhas are abundant in the texts translated into Chinese even prior to the time of Kumārajīva's translation work in Ch'ang-an ca. 402-412. They are mentioned in the *Lotus Sutra*, already shown to probably be the major text in supporting the imagery of Group 18 of the West Wall, and likely also for the Group 24 thousand Buddhas. The theme is a major one in early Chinese Buddhist art, though it seems to often take second place to the three Buddhas, and, as we shall see, the five Buddhas.

The seven Buddhas are most commonly shown together with Maitreya Bodhisattva as the eighth figure in the art of Gandhāra, at Kizil, and they are also shown in this configuration in the important stone stupas (shih-t'a) of central and western Kansu dating to the 420's and 430's. The seven Buddhas also appear prominently in several caves at Yün-kang. However, I do not know of any other example in early Chinese Buddhist art of a row of stupas like the one seen here in Cave 169.

If this row of stupas contained eight stupas, then they are likely to be the eight original stupas of the divided relics of Śākyamuni. There is an example of eight small structural stupas at the monastery of Thareli in the Peshawar region of Gandhāra (Figs. 8.20a, b), probably dating around the 2<sup>nd</sup> or possibly 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This is a theme seen in the art of Gandhāra (Fig. 5.29) and could be the subject in Cave 169 as well, particularly if figures of monks also accompanied them.

### 3. Group 23: "Ping-shen" 丙申 Inscription

Parts of black ink writing remain on the base of each of the two remaining stupas at the right. These two stupas are located just above the three left Buddhas of Group 23 (Figs. 5.18, 5.30a, b). It is partly missing where the clay surface has broken off (Figs. 5.30a, b and 5.31), but a cyclic date remains. The inscription starts on the base of the stupa at the right (facing) (Fig. 5.31). After the 6<sup>th</sup> line of writing, there is a wide, vertical black strip with a curved corner at the top right. This black strip was probably part of the stupa depiction (it may have been a monk figure or part of the stupa base design—see Fig. 5.30b). The inscription writing continues on the other side of the black strip and also onto the adjacent stupa base, which also has a black vertical strip (Fig. 5.30b). The inscription is written with reference to the black strip which appears in the center of the base of these two painted stupas. The inscription, which is fragmentary, reads vertically from right to left as follows:

.....歲在丙申六月十八日清信  
張隆自慨過回法(?)穢  
茲湮世沉淪迴波莫知  
濟故發微心來此靈  
岩(?)行道懺悔回觀舊

<sup>56</sup> Shrines to the seven Buddhas are mentioned in the records regarding Buddhist imagery in the South: 1) the seven shrines with clay images made by the powerful minister of the Eastern Chin court, Ho Ch'ung 何充 (293-347) in the early Eastern Chin; and 2) a painting of the Seven Buddhas of the *Sūramgama Sūtra* painted by the famous painter Wei Hsieh 衛協 (ac. in Chien-k'ang around the early and middle 4<sup>th</sup> century). See Rhie (2002), pp. 54-56.

率自興感遂發憤志  
 造宜修治此  
 .....□諸□  
 .....者  
 一生.....  
 比丘達摩.....  
 共興此□同發此願  
 清信士淳于樂豐供養  
 佛  
 清信杜顗濾一心供養佛時  
 佛弟子孟□蘭供養  
 比丘劉惠微比丘□智太□□

“... year (sui 歲), in ping-shen 在丙申, 6<sup>th</sup> month, 18<sup>th</sup> day, upāsakā (ching-hsin [shih] 清信[士]) Chang Lung 張隆 [or Chang Lung-tzu 張隆自] was regretful that Buddhism had been desecrated. Now the stained world, foggy and lost, is like revolving waves without knowing [Buddha’s] rescue. Therefore, rousing [my/his] humble mind, [I/he] came to this spiritual cliff. Following the [Buddhist] way [hsing tao 行道], repentant and remorseful, [I/he] returned and saw the old [place]. Pulling myself/himself together, raising [my/his] inspiration, [I/he] consequently put forth the will with zeal and correctly made and restored [this place to be] in order... □ various □ ... person(s) one life ... bhikṣu Ta-ma ... worked together to begin this □ and together put forth this wish:

Upāsakā Shun-yü happily offered to Buddha,

Upāsakā Tu T’ou-lu, with whole heart (i-hsin 一心),<sup>57</sup> at the time of offering to Buddha,

Buddhist disciple Meng □-lan offered,

Bhikṣu Liu Hui-wei, Bhikṣu □ Chih-t’ai □□.”<sup>58</sup>

This inscription appears to be describing the feelings of the Buddhist lay-believer (upāsakā) Chang Lung-tsu, who was distressed over the desecration of Buddhism and the state of the world. He roused himself and, with the spirit of repentance and remorse, came to Ping-ling ssu and Cave 169 (“the old [place]”, which he seems to have known from before). He then put forth his will and effort to restore and put “the old place” (i.e., the cave and its images) back in order correctly. Others helped, including bhikṣus, a Buddhist disciple and two lay-believers (upāsakās). The date of this apparent restoration (“to restore and put it back in order correctly”) is the cyclic year “ping-shen”. The *nien-hao* date is missing. This cyclic year could be anytime after the founding of Cave 169, which appears to be in the early Western Ch’in or possibly a little earlier. This would yield such as dates 396 A.D., 456 A.D., 516 A.D., and so on. However, interpreting the inscription, it would appear to be after a period of Buddhist destruction. These occurred at various junctures in Chinese history, but it is most likely, as discussed below, to have been the Buddhist persecution of 446-452 under the Northern (T’o-pa) Wei emperor T’ai Wu-ti 太武帝(r. 424-452).

Teng Yü-hsiang has suggested this to be the case since the art does not exhibit later styles and it is close to the apparent restoration work also seen in the Group 16 standing Buddhas (Figs. 4.48, 4.49), which had very light restoration and remain virtually the same as the original form. Teng believes that the restoration work in both the Group 16 Buddhas and the Group 23 five seated Buddhas to have changed the original very little, except for some slight thin surface covering; thus he argues that the restoration must have been done close to the time of the original make. He suggests the date of 456 as

<sup>57</sup> I-hsin (bhūtatathatā) means with one’s whole heart or mind. Soothill (1937), p. 6a.

<sup>58</sup> Wei Wen-pin, “Ping-ling ssu 169 k’u nei yung tsung-lu” (General Record of the Appearance Inside Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu), in Teng (1994), p. 16.

the most likely date of the restoration, though other dates, such as 396 or 516 were considered.<sup>59</sup> What is of consequence here is that the inscription specifically states that the donors restored it according to the “correct order,” that is, they seem to be specifically saying that they tried to follow the original. Thus, what is of most import is to determine the time of the original make, knowing that the repair, though most likely done in 456 following the possible destruction during the Buddhist persecution of 446-452 A.D., did not much affect the original. Though Teng suggests the original make may have been made in the Western Ch’in period, he does not specify more exactly than that.<sup>60</sup>

It appears likely that the whole upper area of this wall was repaired, some parts perhaps very lightly, perhaps some not at all. That is, the repaired part could have been the part now broken off and maybe the portion remaining was still the original. Or, the restorer simply copied over the painting that was there. Or, the inscription was painted on a surface that was still original, but refers to areas in the cave that were repaired. There is no way of knowing at present without closer technical investigation. Here we will only comment on what is there without reference to the Ping-shen date, as it is virtually a moot point. Judgment has to be made on the style of what can now be seen (it is either original or it is restored closely following the original, as indicated by the Ping-shen inscription).

From examining the inscription and the painting around it, it is clear that the stupa frieze with inscriptions and the wall surface of the three left Buddhas of Group 23 were all of one piece. The painted clay surface has become broken, but enough remains to be certain that the two surfaces were once one. The inscriptions are located just above the portion with the red background with the large green and white lotus between the halos of the two best preserved of the three left (facing) Buddha sculptures of Group 23. Therefore it seems that the stupa frieze and at least the three left seated Buddhas of Group 23 were worked on at the same time.

#### 4. Group 23: Five *Dhyānāsana* Buddha Sculptures

The row of five clay *dhyānāsana* Buddhas of Group 23 form a connected unit with the frieze of painted stupas, judging from the surviving portion below the Ping-shen inscription and above the two far left (facing) *dhyānāsana* Buddhas (Figs. 5.30a, b and 5.32). This unit measures roughly 1.88 m [6.16 ft.] in height, 4.90 m [16 ft.] wide and 0.38 m [1 ¼ in.] deep.<sup>61</sup> This set of images does not have the stone core technique as seen in Group 18 and the seated stone Buddha of Group 23 in Fig. 5.19, but rather uses the wooden structure and clay formation. It is not known if originally there were more than five figures in this row of seated clay Buddhas. However, the wall surface to both sides of this group of five seated Buddhas does not appear to have accommodated more images.<sup>62</sup> Though there are some holes in the wall around the left (facing) of the group these were likely the post holes for now missing sculptures similar to the large Buddha triad of Group 22 in the row below (Fig. 5.32). It appears now that the Group 23 configuration was meant to be of five Buddhas, but this is not completely certain. A configuration of five seated *dhyānāsana* Buddhas in the stone core technique has already been seen on the West (rear) Wall in Group 16 (Figs. 4.25, 4.38), and it may be that they refer to the same or similar

<sup>59</sup> Teng (1994), p. 29.

<sup>60</sup> Teng (1994), p. 29.

<sup>61</sup> Teng (1994), p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> It is possible that one or two more seated Buddhas could have been placed to the left of the group. However, Prof. Teng Yü-hsiang assured me when I asked him about this, that there was not an indication of there being more images there and that there was not enough space for more.



iconographic set of five Buddhas (more on this below).

These five remaining Buddhas are clearly composed of two sections: the three on the left (facing) and two on the right (Figs. 5.30a, 5.32), and they will be referred to in this way. The left and right sections are attached to each other at a juncture which shows that the right group was joined to the left group at the meeting of the mandorlas and pedestals.<sup>63</sup> Stylistically, the two groups also show some differences, so they will be discussed separately with a view to suggesting a possible dating, artistic lineage and sources.

a. *Three Dhyānāsana Buddhas on the Left (east) Side*

i. Brief Description

These three sculptures are certainly among the most artistic and well preserved sculptures in Cave 169 (Figs. 530a, b and 5.32 and color Pl. IV). Of the three seated Buddhas, only the two left ones (facing) retain their original heads (Fig. 5.33); the third one has been recently restored (Figs. 5.30b, 5.32). It is nevertheless evident that all three images were of the same style and probably by the same hand originally. They are superb life-size (H. 1.10 m [3.6 ft.]) examples of early Chinese Buddhist clay sculpture. They exhibit a sturdy, rounded form with a sense of power, the drapery depiction shows clean curves and a strong, sharp quality in the incised lines, and they possess a full, handsome, and boldly sculpted head and face.

These three Buddhas are fashioned with relatively tall torsos with rounded shoulders and arms that show a strong sense of volume and pull away slightly from the body trunk (Figs. 5.32, 5.33). Though the legs appear somewhat short as seen from the front view (Figs. 5.32), the knees are well rounded. The drapery, which covers both shoulders, appears thick and the incised lines are powerful and deep, imparting a somewhat heavy appearance. The lines, parallel with moderately close spacing, describe an asymmetrical arrangement of folds on the chest and produce a high degree of regularity in the overall design. The cowl fold has a twist in the center front and falls as a thick but flat, stiff, long, pointed drape behind the left shoulder. The shape and twist of this cowl resembles that seen on the painted Buddhas of Karadong of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.34a). The borders of the robe at the wrist form a slightly raised band which has two incised fold lines. The border curves over the legs where it lies in a flat plane around the legs and is marked a broad, curved, zigzag, incised line. When seen from the front, this hem appears to have an S-curve over the wrists and legs, which forms quite a distinctive pattern (Figs. 5.30a, b). A similar patterning appears in several of the dhyānāsana Buddhas as well as in the Contemplative Bodhisattva image (Figs. 5.34b, c) in the Wei Wen-lang 魏文朗 stele from Yao hsien 耀縣, Shensi (near Ch'ang-an) dated Shih-kuang 始光 first year (Northern Wei, 424 A.D.).<sup>64</sup> Another distinctive feature of the three left Group 23 Buddhas is the flat plane of the robe coming from under the legs (Figs. 5.30a, 5.33). This plane is scored by narrowly spaced parallel vertical incised lines and the hem is a narrow, slightly raised zigzag border. This feature also occurs in the Wei Wen-lang seated Buddha in Fig. 5.34b. The delicate, raised zigzag border occurs in other examples, such as the clay plaque in the Sian Li-shih (History) Museum tentatively dated in Vol. II to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>65</sup> where this motif is, however, treated more simply. Tiny zigzag hem lines are a feature of

<sup>63</sup> Teng (1994), p. 13 states that the two Buddhas on the west side are made later. Although I have not been able to confirm this by on-site inspection, Prof. Teng Yü-hsiang has told me that there is no question that the clay of the two right Buddhas was attached to and overlaps the wall surface of the three left Buddhas.

<sup>64</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 460-472 and figs. 2.83a-2.85b.

<sup>65</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 423-425.

some Mathurā stone Buddhas of the transition period between the Kushana and Gupta, probably ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., such as the image in Fig. 5.35, which also has similar technique of incised lines for the drapery folds, especially notable in the portion over the knees, as seen in the three left Group 23 Buddhas (Fig. 5.33)

The hands of the three are in the dhyāna mudrā and have a solid, undefined palm (Fig. 5.33). They lie flat with the left hand resting in the right hand. They are not held on edge as observed in the Group 18 dhyānāsana Buddhas and as seen in the vast majority of early Chinese Buddha images of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 2.1e, 2.6–2.9). However, from ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century the flat dhyāna mudrā becomes more apparent, as seen in the I-hsien Buddha of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Fig. 2.10.

The heads on the left Buddhas of Group 23 are an oval shape with taut, full contours (Fig. 5.36). The eyelids have only a slight and subtle swelling, but a black ink line indicates a high lid. The eyes are distinctively Asian with an almond shape and slight upward curvature at the sides. The shape of the eye is slightly more curved than the Group 17 Bodhisattva of ca. 385–400 (Figs. 4.27, 4.33) and slightly less curved than the Amitāyus of Group 6 datable to ca. 424 (Fig. 6.10a, b). The eyebrows have an incised line and do not connect to the nose bridge. They are only moderately arched and are not as high as the arch of the Niche No. 1 Buddha of ca. 375–385 (Figs. 3.10, 3.12). The noses, which appear original and are amazingly intact, are strong and sturdy, quite long and large with a very slightly arched bridge and prominent wings of the nostrils. The particular shaping of the noses is of some note: it is the same as the nose of the Group 17 Bodhisattva of ca. 385–400 (Figs. 4.27, 4.33), but different from the straighter nose bridge of the Group 6 Amitāyus dated 424 (Fig. 6.10a, b). The slightly smiling mouth of each is strongly fashioned with a prominent dip between the nose and upper lip. The mouth has strong contours, and a deep depression at the corners. The shape of the mouth is different from that of both the Group 17 Bodhisattva and the Group 6 Amitāyus. A concave dip subtly demarcates the chin and there is an incised and painted line underneath. The modeling around the mouth is quite naturalistic. This kind of modeling is a prominent feature of some of the heads from Temple “I” at Toqquz-Sarai at Tumshuk (Fig. 5.37a). The massive shaping of the head is very similar to the heads of some of the small bronze Buddhas from the Hopei area of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century, such as the example in Fig. 5.37b, which also shows the clear hairline curvature without a squared corner. The ears have a raised rim and a U-shaped indentation on the lobe, which is not perforated. The neck is short with no lines. Faint black lines can still be seen on the face, marking the contours of the eyes, the mustache and line under the chin.

In general the heads are powerful and bold yet have a gentle and clam expression. The head and specific features of the face, most notably the eyes and nose, are extremely close to those of the Group 17 Bodhisattva of the West Wall (Figs. 4.27, 4.33), which was dated above in Chapter 4 to around 400. Further, the hairline is the cap-shaped contour similar to some of the small bronze Buddhas of late Phase II (ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century), such as that of Fig. 5.37b.

## ii. Stylistic Sources and Tentative Dating

In many significant elements of form and detail, these three left Buddhas of Group 23 relate closely to a number of images of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries from Central Asia. With respect to the sites of the Northern Silk Route, some sculptures from Tumshuk show interesting compatible comparisons. For example, the so-called “dancing deva” clay figure from the Eastern Group of Tumshuk-Tagh in Fig. 4.50 has a firm and strongly rounded body notable in the torso and legs, which is similar to the

degree of solid mass in these three Buddhas. Further, the kind of incised lines, specifically moderately spaced and relatively deeply grooved parallel incisions, form strong lines around the limbs and torso in each case. In addition, the usage of narrower parallel incised lines in the plane of cloth stretched between the legs is a similar patterning in both. The dancing deva image was independently dated in Vol. II to “roughly mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>66</sup> This dancing deva also has remains of red and green coloring like the colors used in these three seated Buddhas, where the robe is red, but green is painted on the under edge of the collar fold. In addition, as noted above, some similarities occur with respect to the Buddha heads from Temple “I” at Toqquz-Sarai (dated in Vol. II as early to mid 4<sup>th</sup> century), especially with respect to the deep indentations around the mouth and the tight fitting of the hair to the cranium (Fig. 5.37a). However, the three Buddhas of Group 23 seem more developed than the Temple “I” sculptures, and have a heavier overall character lacking the crisp and more delicate lineaments of the Temple “I” heads.

With respect to the sites of the Southern Silk Route, similarities appear with the Buddhas of the Karadong wall paintings and with some of the sculptures from Rawak, both near the major center of Khotan. With regard to the former, the powerful face with slightly tilted eyes and strong, indented chin are particularly relevant (Fig. 3.27). Also, the hems of the cowl and around the edges of the arms are similarly patterned, and the hands of the Group 23 Buddhas are similarly fashioned. The Karadong wall paintings have been shown by the excavators to date around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.34a).<sup>67</sup> In a small figure of a seated cross-ankled clay Buddha found at the Rawak Stupa by the Trinkler expedition and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 5.37c), we can observe a close similarity in the rounded body and limb forms, in the strong, proportionately similarly spaced incised lines, the narrow cowl, rather plump face and overall sense of a powerful body. This Rawak image was dated in Vol. I to “late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century” where its similarities with the Cave 169 Group 23 Buddhas was suggested as a factor in dating this Rawak Buddha.<sup>68</sup> Though I would therefore not use this image here as a factor in dating the Group 23 Buddhas, it can certainly be suggested that sources of the Group 23 style could also possibly be linked to the Khotan area. Similar styles also appear in the small Buddhas found by Stein from Rawak and at Ak-Terek nearby Khotan.<sup>69</sup> Considering that Khotan was a Mahāyāna stronghold by ca. 400 (as amply testified by Fa-hsien), it would not be unusual to find possible artistic links between that important Central Asian center and northwest China at this time, especially since Ping-ling ssu under the Western Ch’in was an important site on one of the main communication routes to the Southern Route in Central Asia (See Fig. 1.2 and Appendix I).

We can further note some relationships with the art of India and Gandhāra, though these may not be as direct as the connections with Central Asia, and the dating of these materials is in many cases less precise. Nevertheless, as noted above, the Mathurā Buddha in Fig. 5.35 shows both the sense of solid form and the strong incised linear type that is also present in the three Group 23 seated Buddhas. Images from the greater Gandhāra region provide prolific examples, like that in Fig. 5.37d from the Dharmarājikā in Taxila, which represent similar elements of line and form.

<sup>66</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 561-562.

<sup>67</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 318-319.

<sup>68</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 309.

<sup>69</sup> For the Rawak image, see Rhie (1999), p. 308 and fig. 4.67 (the figure was found near the standing Buddha R.25 (a Style I Buddha) inside the enclosure wall); for Ak-terek see *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317 and fig. 4.84a.

To more closely assess the possible dating of the three Buddhas of Group 23, it is necessary to ascertain the relation of these images with sculptural remains in China. Some relation with the small bronze Buddhas of North China of Phase II and early Phase III has already been noted. For example, the round, taut head and tight shaping of the hair on the cranium is particularly similar to the head of the small bronze in Fig. 5.37b and the head is also similar in shape to that of the Ching-ch'uan Buddha (Fig. 2.1e). The hands are closely similar to the mode used in the I-hsien Buddha of early Phase III (early 5<sup>th</sup> century) in Fig. 2.10 and to others a little later in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 2.11, 2.13). The shape of the knees, strong jaw and cowl neckline are all relatively similar to those features in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha, probably from the Ch'ang-an area, of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.4). Some aspects of the small bronze images of late Phase II and early to mid Phase III relate to the three clay Buddhas of Group 23. Perhaps most revealing is the apparent compatibility of form and line with the seated cross-ankled Buddha in the stone stele dated 411 from the Ch'ang-an area, so far known only from the sketch in Fig. 5.38a.<sup>70</sup>

What we can observe so far is that a considerable number of elements of the three Buddhas seem to relate most consistently to imagery of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Central Asia and also within China. This would appear to indicate that the Group 23 three Buddhas date approximately 400–410 period. They may, in all likelihood, represent the original make, whether or not there was any “restoration” to the images done at the time of the “Ping-shen” restoration inscription, which, as noted above, was most likely to have been written in the cyclic Ping-shen year of 456, just after the restoration of Buddhism following the 446–452 Buddhist persecution under the Northern Wei. If we compare these three Buddhas with imagery of the 450's–460's, we can see that the three Group 23 Buddhas do not exhibit the more powerful conception of the body form or the apparently more advanced linear techniques generally employed at that time in Northern Wei sculpture, such as seen in Fig. 5.38b dated 455 A.D. By comparison, the dated Buddhas of the 450s and 460's under the Northern Wei show relatively more sophistication in the manner of presenting the garment folds and patterns that bespeak a developed style. The three images of Group 23 are more straightforward and do not possess this sense of elaboration. They lack a keen interest in the complex arrangements of linear aspects, and do not impart the generally bolder impression of the Northern Wei sculptures. Though one can see the continued legacy of the style of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century (as seen in the sculptures of the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 images, including that of the three Buddhas of Group 23), the later images of the 450's and 460's are fundamentally different and more developed, a subject that will be more closely discussed in a subsequent volume of this series. Generally speaking, it would appear that the three clay Buddhas of Group 23 can be seriously considered to date ca. 400–410. They do not seem to have received any major restoration that altered their original appearance in any substantial way.

### iii. Relation with West Wall Sculptures in Cave 169

These three Buddhas are not the same style as the Niche No. 1 image, discussed above as probably dating around the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.9). That image is more selective in its linear scheme and has a proportionately large head with large features. These three Buddhas have more in common with the stone core Buddhas of Group 18, though one can only judge from the summary outlines of those images. However, the remains of original clay surfacing on the large standing Buddha (Figs. 4.7, 4.8, 4.9) shows that incised parallel lines of moderately narrow spacing were used. They do

<sup>70</sup> This image was described and discussed in Rhie (2002), pp. 427–427.

not appear to be as bold as those of the three Buddhas, but certainly this and other elements, such as the vertical lines in the robe between the legs and the same red and green color scheme, probably indicate a transition between the Niche No.1 Buddha and the three Buddhas of Group 23. Further, as noted above, the faces of the Group 18 Buddhas resemble that of the dancing deva from Tumshuk, which has other elements that in turn relate to the three Buddhas. This would suggest a development from the Niche No. 1 Buddha to the Group 18 Buddhas and then to the three Buddhas of Group 23. Probably the stone Buddha of Group 23 is around the same time, though a little earlier than the three Buddhas, especially since it uses the older technique of stone core.

The Bodhisattva of Group 17 still partakes of many of the Group 18 qualities as discussed above in Chapter 4. It is more timid and restrained than the bolder and more energetic style of the three Buddhas. However, the faces of the three Buddhas are probably not far removed from that of the Group 17 Bodhisattva, especially in the facial features, from which the three Buddhas appear to have evolved by imparting a bit more softness while basically keeping the similar shape. These comparisons with the internal images of Cave 169 strongly suggest that the three Buddhas are in close connection with the Group 18 and Group 17 major icons in regard to stylistic features. It would seem that the decoration of Cave 169 was developing from the West Wall to the South Wall, with the earliest images at the upper parts and continuing downward chronologically. Technically speaking, this would make sense and may suggest an overall plan for the cave from the beginning.

In sum, the similarities of the Tumshuk dancing deva with both Group 18 and Group 23 Buddhas tend to tie these groups together. The dating of the Group 18 to ca. 385-400 as detailed in Chapter 4 and the relation of the dancing deva to the Sian stele dated 411 in Fig. 5.38a are indications that the three Buddhas of Group 23 probably date around 400-410 or so. It would appear that after the stone core group represented by Group 18 and the large seated stone Buddha of Group 23, and probably also about the same time as the Group 17 Bodhisattva, the three Buddhas of Group 23 were made. As will be seen below, these three Buddhas appear to clearly date before Groups 22 and 21 on the South Wall, as well as being earlier than the surviving North Wall clay images, which relate more directly with the 424 (or 420) inscription in Group 6. Sources of the three Buddha style point to the sculptures of Tumshuk and the Khotan area.

#### iv. Mandorlas

Finally, judging from the remains of the far left Buddha, the mandorlas of these three Buddhas formed a parabolic shape without a pointed top (Fig. 5.33). The circular head halo is contained within the encompassing mandorla. Both head halo and mandorla are formed mainly of wide red and green alternating bands which are outlined by a thin white line on the head halo and by a row of fine white dots, probably indicating pearls, on the encompassing mandorla. The concentric rings of color on the head halo have no designs. The outer rim of the mandorla on the far left Buddha has a continuous pattern of delicate, thin, narrow, wavy, green-colored flames. On the adjacent Buddha's mandorla the outer rim has alternating white, red, green and tan color narrow, vertical, wavy stripes, probably representing flames. The wavy flame pattern appears to be a popular pattern in Cave 169; it is seen in a number of other halos of images, particularly of the North Wall, but the style is bolder in those examples (Figs. 7.22, 7.47). The vertical stripped wave flame design is not seen elsewhere in the cave. There is a large red flame pattern with white squiggles against a dark background in the triangular space above the shoulders of the three Buddhas. Similar mandorla and head halo designs appear on the two standing Buddhas of Group 16 (Figs. 4.48, 4.49), though they are simpler and without the outer



flame patterns or the pearl motif. As noted in Chapter 4 above, the left standing Buddha of Group 16 has a thin overlay covering the original surface. It is hard to judge if this Group 16 image halo is original or repainted at the time of the thin overlay, which is probably the time of the restoration, ca. 456. However, it can be noted that the head halo of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva has a similar green and red head halo as both the Group 16 and the Group 23 Buddhas.

Above the halos are remains of a lotus and an object which looks like a rattle (but is probably a flaming jewel) in green and white with black lines, all painted on a red background. One large intact lotus between the two halos has a broad, sunken seed pod and the petals drawn in a circle around it are white at the bottom and green at the top (Fig. 5.33). It is a different type of lotus from the globular or bud type seen in the East Wall Group 24 thousand Buddha panel, but a similar lotus occurs between the two remaining standing Buddhas of Group 16 (Fig. 4.49). These two examples are the only two of this kind now seen in Cave 169. It is not clear if these are part of the “restoration” or are original, or were repainted in the restoration exactly following the original. Certainly the circumstances connecting Group 16 and Group 23 link these two groups together.

b. *Two dhyānāsana Buddhas on the Right (west) Side*

i. Description

Both Buddhas are nearly identical, though there are distinctions in the halos (Figs. 5.30a, b and 5.39). They have broad upper bodies, but the legs are a little flat and small in proportion to the large chest and arms. The drapery flows smoothly over the form without making junctures that show sharp definitions of the body and arms. Rather, there is only a general roundness of the limbs and trunk, but these appear massive and the upper chest has a prominent muscular swell, as does the abdomen. This soft, large and muscular shape is more pronounced than in the torsos of the three Buddhas at the left, and distinct from the seated Amitāyus of the north wall dated 424 A.D., which has harder planes and a narrower and taller mid-section (Fig. 6.8b).

Drapery folds are indicated by delicate incised lines and the pattern is asymmetrical on the chest. This delicate incised line fold style is also seen in the Nitta abhayā mudrā bronze Buddha (Fig. 4.19) and the Niche No.1 Buddha (Fig. 3.12), in the remaining stucco covering of the stone core Buddha of Group 18 on the West Wall (Fig. 4.9), and in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva and the two standing Buddhas (Fig. 4.49). A raised, flat, band-like border falls over the wrists and spreads diagonally across the legs. The collar band is also flat. It has two incised lines similar to the three Buddhas at the left, but it is without any twist and it has a more pronounced circular shape. In a very unusual manner not seen elsewhere in this cave or in other early Chinese art to my knowledge, the ends of the robe (the collar flap) spread out equally over both shoulders and flare out behind each arm, not just the left arm as is customary (Fig. 5.39). From under the legs, the hems of the robes spread in a thin and broad semicircle with delicate, closely parallel vertical linear striations and a zigzag crinkled edge (Fig. 5.30a). This semicircle spreads over the seat and is much wider than the comparable feature in the three left Buddhas. Also, the crinkled zigzag hem is not quite the same as used on the three left Buddhas. The robe is painted brick red, but the cowl overlap is a creamy white on the underside of the cloth, different from the green in the three left Buddhas. The thick neck has widely spaced circular lines: one where the neck joins the chest, one in the center (close to the head), and the third at the juncture of the head and neck. This linear depiction is also used in many of the figures of the North Wall paintings and is seen in painted form in the Buddha of Group 22 on the South Wall (Fig. 5.45).



The smooth and almost plain appearance of the drapery lends the appearance of a gauze-like robe, a style developed in Gupta India. The thin incised line type appears clearly in Indian sculpture in the seated Buddhas from the Sāñcī Stupa dated 450 A.D. Those Sāñcī Buddhas are, however, highly idealized and the style of these two Ping-ling ssu seated Buddhas is much stronger, akin to the tougher, robust style of the early Gupta period, and similar to the form of the Sarnath Buddha in Fig. 5.40, probably dating to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. These Ping-ling ssu Buddhas could be an example of the style of drapery known as the “Sarnath style” which appears to have been evolving in India and Central Asia in the 4th century. It seems to be one definite stylistic type that co-exists with the trend of using bold incised fold lines as seen in the Mathurā Buddha in Fig. 5.35 and in the three Buddhas seated beside these two of Group 23 in Cave 169.

The heads of the two Buddhas are a strongly Western type, with clear Indian features, especially the large, pointed nose, and with finely shaped smooth, hard planes and boldly chiseled, large features (Fig. 5.41). Though the nose has a shape generally similar to those of the three left Buddhas and the Group 17 Bodhisattva, the bridge is more sharply defined and the nose more pointed. The eyebrows have a swift arc shape and a sweeping curve to the nose without any break. The lids of the eyes are wide, slightly protruding and echo the shape of the eyebrows. The eyes are portrayed differently than in the three left Buddhas and in the Group 17 Bodhisattva: they have a pronounced, large and well defined lid and the shape is narrower and drawn more to the sides. They are also different from the eye type portrayed in the Niche No. 1 Buddha (Fig. 3.10) and in the Group 6 Amitāyus of 424 (Fig. 6.10a, b). The irises have been incised as well as painted black. The eye shape is somewhat similar to the eyes of the Nitta dhyānāsana bronze Buddha and the Kharoṣṭhi inscription bronze Buddha (Figs. 4.19 and 2.4), but the two Buddhas of Group 23 are less harshly treated. The mouths are smiling and have a prominent, curved, almost pinched, upper lip and a notched edge in the lower lip. Quick strokes of black paint describe a small curved mustache, goatee and double lines of the chin and reinforce the eyebrows and contours of the eyes.

The hair is smooth, not highly raised, and was colored black. The edge of the hair has squared corners, rather like the Niche No.1 Buddha and some small bronze Buddhas of Phase II (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century) (Figs. 2.4, 2.5), rather than like the curved shaping on the three Buddhas seated next to them or to the Amitāyus Buddha of 424 A.D. The slightly puffy shape of the hair on the cranium is a feature also seen on some of the small bronze Buddhas of late Phase II (Figs. 2.7, 2.8, 2.11, 2.16). The ears are different from others seen in this cave: they are smooth, slightly concave, elongated planes, do not have any specific molded definition of the pierced holes, and the lobes are still not very long. Finally, the hands are unusually small with delicate narrow fingers. They are held on the side rather than lying flat and have a shape that is related to the Karadong Buddhas and to the Kharoṣṭhi inscription image (Figs. 5.34a, 2.4).

## ii. Elements for Comparative Dating of the Two Buddhas

As noted in the detailed description above, there are some elements that relate to Central Asian and Chinese sculpture from the latter part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but which do not appear to relate to the 424 A.D. (or 420) Group 6 Amitāyus Buddha. In considering a possible dating for the two Buddhas based on specific motifs and details as well as the overall structure and qualities of form and line, the following would also appear to be helpful comparative materials.

The shaping of the broad torso finds some compatibility with the torso style seen in the Contemplative Bodhisattva of the Wei Wen-lang stele dated 424. Both have a dense, massive upper chest and

abdomen with smooth transitions (Fig. 5.34c), though the Bodhisattva's torso is not as broad. The distinct quality of heaviness in the two Group 23 Buddhas also occurs to a degree in the Rietberg Museum bronze dhyānāsana Buddha of ca. 415 (Fig. 5.42), though it is a small image and does not have the fuller body shape or the same drapery configurations. The I-hsien Buddha in Fig. 2.10 of ca. 400 and the Buddha of the Idemitsu Museum in Fig. 2.11 of early 5<sup>th</sup> century also show a broadening of the torso and a tendency for widening the frontal plane, thus suggesting a heavy body in comparison to 4<sup>th</sup> century bronze Buddhas. In the squared shape of the body and massive shape of the arms and shoulders, as well as in the long drawn out shape of the eyes and eyebrows, the dhyānāsana Buddha formerly in the Nitta collection in Fig. 4.19 of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century would appear to show some relation to the style of these two Group 23 Buddhas, though the bronze image is generally harsher and less naturalistic. The stiffness of the bands of the collar and hems over the wrists and legs witnessed in the two Buddhas of Group 23 can relate to the quite stiff qualities of the Ching-ch'uan bronze Buddha from Kansu of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.16) and also to the stone Buddha of Cave 169 Group 23 (Fig. 5.19).

Although there are obvious differences in the posture, type of drapery folds, hair design, etc., between these two Buddhas and the Niche No. 1 Buddha, there is nevertheless a fairly close relationship in the general form with its smooth, almost fragile surfaces and not strongly junctured parts. The stress on the curvatures of the eyebrows and shape of the nose and mouth seem to be developed from the Niche No. 1 Buddha. Changes have occurred, but there is enough stylistic link to presume a date for the two Buddhas of Group 23 to be not far removed from the time of the Niche No. 1 Buddha.

The particular type of facial features are to some extent similar to those of the Asian Art Museum standing Kuan-shih-yin of ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.35), and there is also some compatibility with the facial features of the Seiryōji Shaka, believed to be a replica of the Udayana Buddha brought to China in the early 400's by Kumārajīva (Fig. 5.43).

These various comparisons indicate a probable dating for the two Buddhas of Group 23 sometime between ca. 400 and 420. Again, as with the three Buddhas at the left, there do not appear to be compelling similarities with the imagery around 456, the probable restoration date. The sculptures of those dates changed into a more sophisticated mode with regard to the linear designs of the drapery, more elegant proportioning, and less obvious Western type facial features.

### iii. Mandorlas

The mandorlas of each are painted brick red, white, grey and black (Fig. 5.39). The lack of green or blue is conspicuous—there is not even any green as seen in the mandorlas of the three Buddhas of Group 23. The outer Buddha's mandorla has a pointed shape in both the head halo and the encompassing mandorla (Fig. 5.30a), unlike the other surviving fragments of mandorlas in the five Buddhas of Group 23, which appear to have been rounded. The designs of the outer Buddha's halo consist mainly of alternating bands of red and white with a central line in most of the plain bands. The outer band of flames consists of boldly plain, individual, sickle-shaped flames of alternating red and white. There are no other examples of this pattern in other remaining halos or mandorlas in Cave 169. Two bands, one within the head halo and one in the body halo, employ an interesting and unusual design that looks like a twisted rope (Fig. 5.39). It would appear to be derived from a similar design commonly used in Roman art, which probably derives from the ancient Mesopotamian design of twisted snakes.

It later became widespread throughout the Roman empire. The design also occurs in pottery found in Gandhāra and elsewhere in Pakistan and has made its way to Central Asia, where it appears in other Buddhist art, such as Kizil Cave 212 (early 5<sup>th</sup> century), and in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169. There are quite a number of examples from Northern Wei art of the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, including on the halo of the bronze Kuanyin statue dated 453.<sup>71</sup> By that time it had lost its association with the two twisted snakes and had become simply an abstract design. It does show, however, the interesting way in which motifs are assimilated in art and make their way across vast distances.

The mandorla of the inner Buddha considerably overlaps that of the outside Buddha and also has more usage of grey color. In addition to the bands of plain color, it utilizes bands of flame designs and of small circles each with a central dot, perhaps indicating the representation of a pearl or jewel. The outer rim of flames depicts a simple pattern of individual flames resembling loops, outlined against a grey ground in rather free brush style. Tiny flashes of flame design also appear in the zone above the shoulders of Buddha. What appear to be red lotus buds can be seen to the left of the inner Buddha's halo and above the two Buddhas between their halos. Remnants of banners or scarves seem to appear at the right of the outer Buddha's halo.

The designs in these mandorlas are not seen elsewhere in Cave 169 and may well be a later restoration, possibly at the time of the Ping-shen inscription (perhaps 456). They have the appearance of being added on next to the mandorlas of the three Buddhas. Also, the two Buddhas of Group 23 may have received some restoration of a thin clay surface and paint. They are different from the three Buddhas, and clearly made by a different hand, but they probably do not date far apart.

## 5. *Conclusions*

The above analysis suggests that the style of the three Buddhas at the left (facing) of the five Buddhas of Group 23, would be consistent with a dating ca. 400–420, probably around the middle years of that time span, ca. 410–ca. 415. The same conclusion can be reached with respect to the two right dhyanāsana Buddhas, despite the differences with the three Buddhas. The characteristics of these five Buddhas are not the essence of the sculptural styles of ca. 456, the probable date of the Ping-shen restoration inscription. The images of the 450's and 460's are much bolder in the freedom and variety of line and the masses generally become more abstract, solid and powerful. These five Buddhas, because of their excellence, are prime images of early 5<sup>th</sup> century Chinese sculpture. They are important in understanding the differences between the sculpture of this formative period and the more fully developed styles of the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.

The two right side Buddhas of Group 23 are different than the three left side Buddhas and have been attached or added to the three Buddhas. It would appear that both groups were made within a reasonably similar period, probably before the making of the Group 22 images and before the 424 A.D. (or 420) Group 6 Amitāyus.

As discussed in regard to the five small seated Buddhas of Group 16 on the West Wall, the set of five Buddhas is known from Chinese literary records (the five Buddhas of Tai-K'uei in the south) and in Gandhāran art. This kind of configuration, though different from the more usual sets of three Buddhas, seven Buddhas, and thousand Buddhas, seems to be emerging as one of the sets occurring in Buddhist art from at least the late 4<sup>th</sup> century in China and elsewhere, probably connected to the

<sup>71</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.57c.

movement in Mahāyāna Buddhism of this time. Discussion of the iconography of the five Buddhas in this period is considered in more detail below in Chapter 8 in relation with what appear to be other sets of the five Buddhas in Cave 169 (Groups 20 and within the paintings of Group 13) and with the art of Gandhāra.

### B. *Middle Zone: Groups 22 and 21*

The middle zone is wide and includes at least three levels. The upper part now has the remains of a triad, the middle part the remains of two dhyānāsana Buddhas, and the lower part just has holes indicating that there were probably once some images there (Figs. 5.1, 5.2).

#### 1. *Group 22: Standing Buddha Triad*

Just below the two right side Buddhas of Group 23 is the remains of a triad (Fig. 5.44) with a standing Buddha (H. 1.80 m [nearly 6 ft.]) and the left standing attendant Bodhisattva (H. 1.40 m [4½ ft.]). The Buddha's right attendant is lost, though part of the mandorla remains. These images are made of clay in high relief against a clay wall screen backing made in the shape of the joined mandorlas of the images (Fig. 5.44). From the existing holes in the rock, it seems there may have been a series of three such large, possibly triad, configurations across this zone of the middle area of the South Wall (Figs. 5.18, 5.32). If so, they might have been the Buddhas of the Three Ages (Past, Present, and Future). Certainly, however, the triad of Buddha with attendant Bodhisattvas is a Mahāyāna theme continuing what appears to be a thoroughly Mahāyānist scheme in this cave. The Group 22 triad is an exceptional sculpture surviving together with elaborately painted mandorlas.

##### a. *Buddha*

The Buddha is missing most of the lower part of both legs, feet and the lotus pedestal, though some portions still survive (Fig. 5.51). The image stands holding the edge of his robe with both the lowered right hand and the raised left hand, which touches the hem of the saṅghātī on the chest (Fig. 5.45). The hand positions are the same as seen in the Group 18 standing Buddha (Figs. 4.7, 4.8), but the Group 18 Buddha holds the hem in the orthodox manner in his left hand, which this Group 22 Buddha does not do.<sup>72</sup> The robe is worn with the right shoulder bare, but an edge lightly crosses the right shoulder and the edge of the under robe is revealed on the chest. This is the "open sling mode with shoulder cap" (Fig. 4.15d), also the same mode as seen in the standing Buddha of Group 18 on the West Wall.

Fitting close to the body, the robe reveals the slim shape of the form in full roundness, somewhat like the Gupta Indian style, and as seen in the Rawak standing Buddhas as well as being rather similar to the clay standing Buddha statue from Kizil Cave 77 in Fig. 5.46.<sup>73</sup> The form of the Group 22 Buddha is more slender and wiry than that of the Group 18 standing Buddha (Fig. 4.7). There is an alertness to the well-revealed body, especially conveyed by the posture of the right arm, which pulls away from the main body in an angular, somewhat showy manner with the right elbow crooked outward and the hand bent acutely at the wrist, different from the more gentle posture of the Group 18 Buddha. Similar arm postures appear in the Asian Art Museum bronze standing Bodhisattva of ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.35). This posture may relate to the mannered poses of some of the sculptures at Rawak, such

<sup>72</sup> Perhaps there is some repair here.

<sup>73</sup> Cave 77 at Kizil was studied in Vol. II and dated to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (or, more narrowly, to ca. 375). Rhie (2002), pp. 678 and 719. For this Buddha, see pp. 675-676.

as the Style VI standing Buddhas (Fig. 5.47), though lacking the “combed line” linear fold technique. The Style VI group was studied in Vol. I and dated there to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> to first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>74</sup>

The head of the Group 22 Buddha is round and firm with smooth, taut planes (Figs. 5.48, 5.49). It is a handsome head, close in style and specific features to the heads of the left (east) three Buddhas of Group 23 (Fig. 5.36), though with a bit less modeling to the mouth and chin, and more modeling to the inner part of the ear. The nose has the same curvature with a beak-like point that is especially similar to those of the three Buddhas of Group 23 and of the Group 17 Bodhisattva (Figs. 5.33, 4.27). The head of the Group 22 Buddha bears some resemblance to the styles of Kizil, as seen in the wall paintings of Cave 212 (Cave of the Seafarers) in Fig. 5.50, dated in Vol. II to ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>75</sup> This is especially notable with regard to the full, taut, rounded shape of the face. The Group 22 Buddha seems within a relatively close stylistic lineage from the Group 17 Bodhisattva and the Group 23 Buddhas (east side), though there are some differences and changes. The head of Amitāyus Buddha of Group 6 dated with the 424 A.D. (or 420) inscription shows a change in all the features (Figs. 6.10a, b).

The incised lines of the Group 22 Buddha’s garments show a variety of patterns and techniques using parallel incised lines in groups (Fig. 5.45). On the inner garment and the outer garment over the chest area the lines are delicately incised and narrowly spaced; they curve with the shape of the body and with respect to the curving hems. Over the left arm, however, the parallel incised lines are coarser and more widely separated and there seems to be some repair on the outer edges of the upper arm. On the upper legs, relatively widely spaced incised parallel lines make a broad U-shape across the front of the body. Such variation is not seen in the Group 23 Buddhas, which have an overall consistently in the usage of the incised line technique. This kind of breaking up of the surface can be seen in the small standing wooden Buddha from Tumshuk (western Group of Tumshuk-Tagh) in Fig. 4.17, though it lacks the freedom of the extended arms and wavy edges of the robe falling from the arms as seen in the Group 22 Buddha. This wooden Buddha likely dates stylistically a little earlier than the Group 22 Buddha, and seems to foreshadow the type of image seen in the Group 22 Buddha.

The borders of the outer robe and under robe are a little stiff, but have more curvature than the hems of the Group 18 Buddha (Fig. 4.7). The delicately fluttering yet tight, wavy edges of the hems falling in a slanting movement from the arms make a delightfully light and somewhat decorative touch. Similar wavy edges (but with smaller and even tighter folds) appear in the standing Buddhas of Style VI at Rawak (Fig. 5.47). These wavy edges appears to be a new style; the standing Buddha of Niche No. 1 does not use such elaborate hem patterns (Fig. 3.9) and the Group 18 Buddha has the more restrained hems that fall close to the body similar to the Tumshuk-Tagh wooden image in Fig. 4.17. The rather loose and free manner of the wavy hems in the Group 22 Buddha would seem to predate the kind of controlled and more refined wavy edging seen in the standing Buddhas of Group 7 on the North Wall (Fig. 7.16c), which, as discussed below in Chapter 7, in many ways shows a clear development from the style of the Group 22 standing Buddha.

The patterns of lines in the Group 22 Buddha could relate to the patterns known in the traditional rendering of the so-called King Udayana image, though it would not appear to be an exact copy. The most authenticated example of this famous image is the Shaka of the Seiryōji discussed in Vol. II.<sup>76</sup> The Chinese copies are said to have originated from the copy brought to China by Kumārajīva in ca. A.D.

<sup>74</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 312.

<sup>75</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 681-683.

<sup>76</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 441-445 and figs. 2.73a-g.



401 or 402 when he arrived in Ch'ang-an. Possibly this famous image could have influenced some of the Buddha images of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century in China, and perhaps elements filtered into the artistic modes of the time. This is difficult to determine, but it can be kept in mind as one of the possible factors influencing change in the Chinese Buddha image of the Ch'ang-an and related areas of North China in particular around this time.

The lotus pedestal of the Buddha has what appears to be a low pod and big double lobed protuberances (the lobes possibly representing sepals) which are prominently raised above the thick edge of the pointed petal (Fig. 5.51). The lotus petals on the pedestal of the Group 18 standing Buddha on the West Wall (Fig. 4.7) are similar. The pedestal of the Asian Art Museum bronze Bodhisattva of ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century also has a prominently raised double-lobed lotus pedestal (Fig. 2.12).

The mandorla is a well harmonized design of some elaboration without being overly ornate (Figs. 5.44, 5.45). The color scheme is mainly red and green with white used for some thin lines and the rather prominent separating lines of pearls. Black appears for the hair of the small Buddhas in the large band of dhyānāsana Buddhas in red robes with green mandorlas and lotus seats. The circular head halo of the large image has three bands of plain white, red and green and a larger outer rim of red wavy, somewhat separated, tongues of flame against a green background. In their shape and internal lines, the quite large wavy tongues of flame have a notable similarity with the outer flames of the mandorla of the Idemitsu Museum bronze Buddhist altar ensemble in Fig. 2.11, which was studied in Vol. II as dating ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century (early in Phase III).<sup>77</sup> Similar flame shapes also appear in the halo of the seated Buddha in the gold repoussé hat ornament with Buddha image discovered in a tomb of ca. 415 in Liaoning (Fig. 2.21a).<sup>78</sup> In the curved triangular space above the Buddha's shoulders there is a large, jaggedly shaped red flame on a green ground. The outermost rim encompasses the entire mandorla, which seems to have curved upward to a gentle point, similar to the mandorla in the wall painting of Kizil Cave 14, dated in Vol. II to ca. 400 (Fig. 4.22b). The pattern on this outer band appears to be a three-pointed "honeysuckle leaf" design, which also has an interior white line. This design seems particularly popular in the late 450's, where it appears on some Buddhist stone steles, such as the one in Fig. 5.38b dated 455 A.D. under the Northern Wei. However, it also appears in the Sian stone stele dated 411 as rather large individual shapes (Fig. 5.52). The design in the Group 22 example is a little tighter than the design in the halo of the stone seated Buddha of Group 23 (Figs. 5.19-5.21), which, however, is probably a flame shape rather than the honeysuckle motif. Examples of the honeysuckle motif in the mandorlas of the 450's and later are generally very compact. It appears that many of the styles and motifs in Cave 169 carry through into the mid-5th century to become standard in the works of the Northern Wei after it had conquered the Kansu area in 439. The indebtedness of the Northern Wei sculptural forms to the Kansu area (and probably also of the Ch'ang-an area, but few images remain from there) from earlier in the century can be a cause of confusion in the dating of works of the 5th century. Despite the apparent similarities, there are, however, clear differences which separate the works and one must come to understand the differences between the early, middle and later phases of the Buddhist art which is experiencing its major formative expression in the early 5th century in the Kansu area. The middle phase comes in the 2nd half of the 5th century and the later phase in the first

<sup>77</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 420-422.

<sup>78</sup> James Watt (2004), cat. no. 37, p. 130. It comes from the tomb of Feng Su-fu 馮素弗 (d. 415), who was the brother of Feng Pa 馮跋 (409-431), founder of Northern Yen 北燕 (409-436).



half of the 6th century, when Buddhist art in Kansu was in a general decline and kept alive mainly in the Tun-huang caves.

b. *Bodhisattva*

The left attendant Bodhisattva (Figs. 5.44, 5.45, 5.53) is an important image in understanding the evolution of the Bodhisattva form within Cave 169. Elements clearly reveal developments from the earlier Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.26a, b) and Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.40. On the other hand, the standing Bodhisattvas of the Group 6 Amitāyus niche of ca. 424 (Figs. 6.14b, 6.15b) and of the Group 3 niche (Fig. 7.53a), both from the North Wall, show later stylistic changes, as will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 below.

The Group 22 Bodhisattva stands frontally to the height of the Buddha's shoulder and holds its hands in the añjali mudrā (Fig. 5.53). This mudrā is not commonly seen in attendant Bodhisattvas in early Chinese Buddhist art prior to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, but does appear in the right attendant of the 424 stele from Sian.<sup>79</sup> The body is tall and slender with long arms and legs and a proportionately small head and short upper torso. These proportions are different from the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva, which has more stretch in the upper torso, a bigger head, and a heavier build (Fig. 4.26a). There is also a marked difference between these two Bodhisattvas with regard to the drapery type and configuration.

The dhoti of the Group 22 Bodhisattva has a thick waistband roll different from the flat band of the Group 17 Bodhisattva. The edge between the legs falls diagonally with a mildly rippling wavy edge from the left side of the waist to the right leg. The Group 17 Bodhisattva does not have this arrangement, but has a flat panel with several vertical incised lines indicating pleats. A more complex but nevertheless similar arrangement appears on the torso in Fig. 5.54 from Kizil Cave 77 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or perhaps, more narrowly, third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>80</sup> This Kizil Cave 77 image also has the chest shawl (uttariya) tied around the waist in an Indian manner with the long ends hanging on the outside of the left hip. A simplified version of this Indian mode occurs on the Group 22 Bodhisattva where the ends of the uttariya shawl, portrayed merely as a flat strip with a slanted hem and several vertical incised lines, hang to the knee at the outer side of both legs. This casual wearing of the uttariya eventually drops out of Chinese Bodhisattva representations altogether. Its appearance here could indicate elements adopted from concurrent usage in Central Asia, as seen in the Kizil Cave 77 example.

The variety of linear differentiation and patterning in the Group 22 Bodhisattva is quite interesting. Delicate incised lines with long, narrow V shapes are vertically arranged on each thigh while more coarsely executed, widely spaced U-shaped folds are used over the lower legs. This variety between delicate and bold incised lines to complement the distinct differences and changes in linear patterning of fold lines also occurs in the Buddha of Group 22 as noted above. In the Group 17 Bodhisattva, though fold lines are arranged into regular patterns of U-shaped and vertical folds, the incised line technique is the same throughout and the patterns are not heightened by the changes in incised technique as in the Group 22 Bodhisattva. Patterning of groups of incised lines becomes more evident in

<sup>79</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 472-474, fig. 2.88a.

<sup>80</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 678 and 719; for discussion of this torso see pp. 676-677, where the relation with the style of this Cave 169 Bodhisattva style is noted.

the Cave 169 North Wall figures and continues to be a major factor in many images from the mid and later 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup>

The hems of the dhoti, emphasized by red color contrasting with the green of the main portion, still have a hint of the Gandhāran S-curve lift as the cloth flares out around the ankle area, but it is reduced to a simpler loop shape compared with this motif in the Group 17 Bodhisattva, and even as seen in the standing Buddha of Group 18 (Figs. 4.26a, 4.7, 4.8). The hem patterns of the Group 22 Bodhisattva are, however, relatively similar to the shaping of the hems of the Contemplative Bodhisattva of Group 16 (Fig. 4.40), which also has a similar rolled waist band, but it lacks the delicate/coarse distinction in the incised line technique of the Group 22 Bodhisattva, and is closer to the incised line mode used in the three Buddhas of Group 23 (Fig. 5.33).

An important feature of the Group 22 Bodhisattva is the long shoulder shawl, which is not worn across the front of the body as in the Group 17 Bodhisattva, but is a more elaborate version of the kind used in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva. Two features are of special note: behind the shoulders and upper arms the shawl is basically a curved, raised, flat band. It curves up slightly behind the head, just as the example in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.40. However, in the Bodhisattvas of Group 6 (dated to ca. 424 or 420), the shape is presented as a pure arc without apparent lift behind the head (Fig. 6.14b). The shape of lifted arc behind the head probably derives from the modes seen in Central Asia, especially in the figures from Kizil where the shawl falls from the back of the head. After looping over the elbows, the long shawl of the Group 22 Bodhisattva flares dramatically to the sides in two large curves that show the front and underside of the shawl as a series of S-curves, ending in a slanted hem. The Group 17 Bodhisattva does not have this form for its shawl, but the Group 16 Bodhisattva shows a looser and simpler version close to that of the Group 22 Bodhisattva. The shawls of the Bodhisattvas of the Group 6 niche of ca. 424 (or 420) retain a bare reference to this manner of portrayal (Figs. 6.14b, 6.15b), but have essentially changed the style. This mode of shawl portrayal is an important feature in dissecting the styles and techniques of early 5<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist images in China. In the case of the Group 22 images, with regard to this and a few other factors, it seems that the dating would fall between the Group 17 Bodhisattva (shown above to date around 385-400, but a little later than Group 18) and the Group 6 Bodhisattvas dating ca. 424 (or 420), and probably somewhat later than the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva, which, as discussed independently above, is probably ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. These factors probably indicate a place for the Group 22 niche ca. 410-415.

The head of the Group 22 Bodhisattva is round with full cheeks (Fig. 5.53). The triangular knot of hair on top of the head—a typical form in the Bodhisattvas of Cave 169—is bound at the base by a wreath-like band with slanted scores, similar to the hair band worn by the Bodhisattvas of Group 6, but it is smaller in size, and does not have added dots between the slanted scores like the Group 6 Bodhisattvas. The Group 22 image also has a small ribbon fillet that divides the roll of hair on the forehead from the smoothly combed hair of the cranium. The incised lines impart a neat appearance to the hair, some of which cascade as a single mass onto the back behind the shawl, just as seen in the

<sup>81</sup> This is a major mode of drapery representation that continues into the mid and later 5<sup>th</sup> century. The early character of this Group 22 figure becomes clear when compared with the standing Bodhisattvas of Cave 259 at Tun-huang, discussed in Vol. II as dating in the 450's. The elegance of the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century style is a marked difference with the strong yet delicate aspect of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century style represented by the Group 22 Bodhisattva. The combination of strength of simple form and delicate line is a characteristic of the early sculptures in Cave 169 and elsewhere in Kansu. The Asian Art Museum bronze Bodhisattva in Fig. 2.12, discussed in Vol. I as dating ca. 400, also partakes of these characteristics.

Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.40), but again, different from the individual long locks of hair falling onto the shoulders as seen in the Group 17 Bodhisattva. The Group 6 Bodhisattva of ca. 424 (or 420) has a simplified arrangement that brings the long hair in front of the shawl rather than behind it as in the Group 22 Bodhisattva. As with other features, the Group 22 Bodhisattva shows closest similarity with the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva, while the Group 6 Bodhisattvas exhibit more changes. The earrings of the Group 22 image are button-like jewels, a type interestingly seen in other cave temple images in Kansu, such as Chin-t'a ssu (west cave) and T'ien-t'i shan, which will be studied in Vol. IV. Such earrings are different from the tassel type more commonly seen in Cave 169 Bodhisattvas, but they do also appear on the Contemplative Bodhisattva of Group 16, which also has a similar curved, wide, flat necklace. There is no trace of a necklace on the Group 17 Bodhisattva, and the Group 6 Bodhisattvas have a different style necklace with narrower form and a pointed lower edge. The armbands of the Group 22 Bodhisattva are narrow double loops with a button jewel similar to that of the earrings. It is related to, but not the same as, the slightly wider armbands on the Bodhisattvas of Group 6. Armbands are missing in the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva and the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva.

The mandorla of the Group 22 Bodhisattva has a rounded top and is attached to the mandorla of the Buddha, which governs the main shape (Fig. 5.53). The circular head halo has plain red and green alternating bands. On the mandorla of the Bodhisattva, a large red flame appears behind the shoulders and lower body. Beside this flame is a plain red band. What appears as a plain red and green band next to this outermost red band may have had narrow wavy flames similar to those on the Group 23 far left Buddha (Fig. 5.33), now preserved in the lower part near the Bodhisattva's right leg (Fig. 5.53). The outermost band is a delightful rim of white flame patterns on a green ground. The comma-shaped inner part is similar to the flame rim in the stone Buddha's head halo in Group 23 (Figs. 5.20-5.21), but it is more delicately portrayed in the Group 22 Bodhisattva's mandorla. A section of the mandorla of the missing right attendant is still visible in the lower part near the Buddha's lowered right hand (Fig. 5.44). It has remains of the light colored outer flame band and a wavy green flame pattern similar to the left attendant's mandorla.

### c. *Conclusions*

The examination presented above indicates that the Group 22 images probably date between the images of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century from the West Wall (Groups 18, 17 and 16) and the images of the Group 6 Amitāyus niche of ca. 424 or 420 A.D. The Buddha probably dates a little after the five Buddhas of Group 23. From the analysis of the Bodhisattva image, it is possible to see that it seems to date between Group 16 and Group 6, so one could suggest a date of ca. 410-415; i.e., late in the reign period of Ch'ien-kuei (r. 388-412) or early in that of Chih-p'an (412-428) when the capital moved to Fu-han in 412. The Western Ch'in defeated Southern Liang in 414, and the kingdom continued to flourish after this.

The identity of this triad is not clear. It may have been part of a larger group, such as the Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future. One or two accompanying Bodhisattvas with the añjali mudrā could indicate either Śākyamuni or Maitreya Buddha, but the antecedents for such representations are not yet evident, even in the art of Gandhāra, where the development of the triad with Buddha and Bodhisattvas is a complex evolutionary process that is not yet well understood. Since the iconography of the West Wall and East Wall thousand Buddha painting can probably be linked to the *Lotus Sutra* as discussed above, it is possible that the South Wall also has a relation with that sutra. There is also an

apparent interest with multiple series of Buddhas, such as the five Buddhas, and it is possible that the various zones of the South Wall have a relation with such sets of Buddhas, which are commonly noted in the Mahāyāna sutras that were translated into Chinese by this time. This issue will be addressed further in Chapter 8, which considers the role and relation of Gandhāran art with elements of the Cave 169 imagery.

## 2. Group 21: Two Individual Dhyānāsana Buddhas

In the middle area of the middle zone of the South Wall and towards the left (facing) are remains of two seated dhyānāsana Buddhas (image H. 68 cm [26.77 in.]; total H. with mandorla 1.07m [3.5 ft.] ) (Fig. 5.55). Though separated from each other, they were once probably part of a line of images, the others of which are now lost. Judging from the placement of holes in the wall, there may have been three, five, seven or more in the line. This iconography would be in harmony with the other numerical sets of Buddhas, one of the major themes in this cave.

The remaining part at the right (west) side shows part of a clay wall surface and a seated clay dhyānāsana Buddha with a portion of the painted mandorla still surviving (Figs. 5.55, 5.56a). To the left (facing), is another dhyānāsana Buddha with part of the clay wall surface containing some remains of the mandorla (Figs. 5.55, 5.56b). These two Buddhas are separated by a gap where the clay surface is missing, but there are two holes for vertical pole supports, suggesting that the two Buddhas were originally joined by a clay wall surface and possibly another dhyānāsana image. The style of both of the remaining Buddhas is quite similar to, but a little more simplified than, the three left Buddhas of Group 23 (Fig. 5.33): they are a little coarser, freer, bolder and more abbreviated in execution. They are clearly by a different artist(s) than the three left Buddhas of Group 23, yet they are in many ways following the same general form. At the same time, there is an increased gentleness in the physiognomy.

The halo of the western (right) Buddha has boldly curved flame patterns, somewhat like those of the Group 12 large painted Buddha of the North Wall (Fig. 7.36) of ca. 425, and somewhat akin to the outer flames of the mandorla of the inner Buddha of the two western (right) Buddhas of Group 23 (Fig. 5.39) and to the big flames over the shoulders of the Bodhisattva of Group 22 (Fig. 5.53). Overall, these two Buddhas of Group 21 have some features apparent in other imagery in Cave 169, but they lack the high degree of linear precision in the sculptural form that is seen in the sculptures of Group 23 and Group 22. Possibly this is a factor of different artists at work, or possibly these two Group 21 sculptures can be associated with the restoration that may have occurred in the cave around 456, the probable date of the P'ing-shen restoration inscription in Group 23. Even if they were part of the restoration, they would, as indicated by the inscription wording discussed above, basically be following the original iconographic scheme and original style.

### C. Lower Zone: Group 20

The area below Group 21 is a broad expanse of sloping wall with some remaining wooden posts probably used for supporting clay image configurations (Fig. 5.55). Nothing remains of the imagery, however, and it is difficult to conjecture what the configurations would have been. Below this wide middle slope of the South Wall the lowest zone near the floor is fashioned into a vertical wall which retains much of its clay covering and a row of five very interesting clay relief sculptures, one standing and four seated in dhyānāsana (Figs. 5.55 and 5.57). Today they are located near the edge of the entrance. Most of the painting on the clay surfacing of the wall is badly faded. The images (designated here from A-E) are

discussed from right to left as facing the wall (Fig. 5.57). They form an exceptionally interesting and fine group for a number of reasons.

### 1. *Group 20: Seated Buddha (A)*

At the far right is a seated Buddha (A) with a saṅghātī worn in a distinctive version of the open sling style (see diagram in Fig. 4.15f). It is a form that arises with the wearing of the saṅghātī in sling mode when seated in the dhyāna mudrā, which allows the saṅghātī to drop low onto the lap, thus revealing more of the torso and the under robe (Fig. 5.58 and diagram Fig. 4.15f). Here the edge of the outer robe lies over the right shoulder and along the outer edge of the upper right arm, then drops low (under the hands in dhyāna mudrā) revealing the under robe over the chest and abdomen, and finally moves vertically up between the body and left arm with the border forming a kind of cascading zigzag folding pattern. The left arm is totally covered and the end of the saṅghātī drops, as customary, behind the left shoulder and arm. Judging from the part of the border hem that remains on the outer robe on the Buddha's left side, the hem seems to have been a kind of zigzag band of staggered, ruffle-like layers scored with vertical incised lines. The inner robe, worn under the right arm, has a rather narrow, raised rim with at least one interior scored line. The zigzag lapping of the left side border of the outer robe forms a distinctive pattern which is somewhat loosely and naturalistically portrayed in this example.

Two elements particularly distinguish this mode of drapery: 1) the low draping of the outer robe to reveal the shape of the chest and abdomen (not an Indian manner); 2) the ruffled, zigzag fall of the hem on the left side. Within Cave 169, this distinct mode of wearing the outer robe in seated Buddhas occurs in two other pertinent examples: in the Buddha of the triad in the East Wall thousand Buddha panel (Fig. 5.8a, b) shown above to date around 400 (see above section I.A.2.b), and in the Amitāyus Buddha of Group 6 on the North Wall datable to ca. 424 (Fig. 6.8b). The Buddha in the East Wall painting is in the abhayā mudrā, so the right arm pulls the edge of the saṅghātī into a tense, almost semi-circular, band over the torso. The borders are flat and do not have any zigzag patterning. The torso is, however, clearly exposed with upper chest and abdomen units. On the other hand, the dhyānāsana Amitāyus Buddha of Group 6, datable to 424 (or 420), has a very similar mode to the Group 20 Buddha (A) in all respects, except that the patterning on the Amitāyus is more solidified and the proportioning of the body is more elongated, yielding the impression of a more sophisticated, well formulated image. It appears that the Group 20 image is later than the Group 24 painted Buddha and has an earlier, slightly more naturalistic and less patterned and refined form compared with the 424 (or 420) Amitāyus, which exhibits a confidence probably indicative of a developed idiom. The artistry in both cases is of high quality, again revealing the high currency given to the making of much of the imagery in Cave 169.

A similar mode of wearing the saṅghātī appears in the Buddha sculpture of Kumtura GK Cave 20 (Fig. 5.59a), a cave dated in Vol. II to ca. 420 (its wall paintings having a close relation with the North Wall paintings of Cave 169 of ca. 425), but the ruffled hem is very delicately defined and there is an intricate design of raised folds in both the under robe and saṅghātī—none of which appear in the Cave 169 Group 20 or even Group 6 images. Similarly, there are examples in the stone stupas of Liang chou (Kansu) of the 430's and of Turfan of ca. 440's and in the Buddhas in the large stupa of the main monastery at Chiao-ho in Turfan (all of which will be studied in subsequent volumes of this series),



but these forms are slightly different and are based on the developments seen in the 430's in the stone stupas from Liang chou in Kansu. They do not have the broadly exposed chest and abdomen as in the Group 20 Buddha (A) and, unlike the Group 20 Buddha, represent the saṅghātī as pulled in a manner over the left arm that completely hides the shape of the arm. It seems clear that Buddha (A) of Group 20 is a rare example in the earlier stages of the evolution of this particular mode of wearing the saṅghātī, prior to the more evolved forms of the Kumtura GK 20 Buddha and the 424 A.D. Group 6 Amitāyus in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu. Images from the late 420's and the 430's-440's adjust the mode to have more ruffled edges and to almost completely cover the torso, leaving only a kind of V-shaped opening exposing the chest. This latter form grows in usage from around the 420's in China.

A style which is quite close to the Group 20 Buddha (A) appears in the dhyānāsana Buddha of the small bronze relief plaque of the *Lotus Sutra* in the Freer Gallery of Art dated in Vol. II to ca. first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>82</sup> It has a variant of the open sling with rim and shoulder cap mode (Fig. 4.15e) which, when used with the dhyāna mudrā, as it is in this case, produces the form seen in Fig. 4.15g. The examples shown in Fig. 4.15 (f-i) seem to represent experimental developments for portraying the Buddha's robe when the Buddha is seated in dhyānāsana. They appear in images from ca. 420's-440's and later in some locales of Central Asia and China. They probably are descended from some forms known in Haḍḍa and Gandhāra, but made more elaborate in patterning in the Central Asian and Chinese sculpture of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The round head of the Group 20 Buddha (A) with its soft features has some similarities with the clay Buddha head from Khotan in Fig. 5.59b of ca. mid or second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>83</sup> Though the eyes are clearly different, the shaping of the head and mouth are closely similar. This Khotan head was already noted in Vol. I to resemble the 424 Group 6 Amitāyus head as well, especially in the eyes—another indication that the Group 20 Buddha may date relatively close to the Amitāyus image. It would appear that both the body and head slightly pre-date the 424 Group 6 Amitāyus image, perhaps by only a few years, ca. 415-420.

## 2. Group 20: Seated Buddha (B)

To the east is a dhyānāsana Buddha (B) (Figs. 5.57, 5.60), whose style is relatively similar to the dhyānāsana Buddhas of Group 21 (Figs. 5.56a, b) and even more closely similar to the three east Buddhas of Group 23 (Figs. 5.33). It appears that the images of Group 21 and this Group 20 Buddha (B) are basically following a similar stylistic type or trend, represented in part by the three left Buddhas of Group 23. All have a generally sturdy body with rounded limbs and an outer robe that covers both shoulders and is evenly covered with parallel incised lines. The central fold of cloth over the legs has vertical lines and a zigzag or finely pleated hem. The simplicity of the linear design in both the Group 21 and this Buddha (B) of Group 20 suggests a well known formula with only minor changes, probably reflecting the hand of different artists and probably not separated by much time.

This Buddha (B) of Group 20 has an overall ease and unity with a few details that are different from the three Buddhas of Group 23, and it is more skillfully executed than the Buddhas of Group 21. Compared to the three Buddhas of Group 23, there is a looser and wider arrangement of the fold lines over the chest, the hems over the wrists have a horizontal fold that creates a break or zigzag linear element,

<sup>82</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 431 and fig. 2.71a.

<sup>83</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 171 and fig. 410a.



and the hems of the garment spreading in the center front has a band-like lower edge with small pleats. This latter motif is not far from the hems as depicted in the seated cross-ankled Buddha in the Sian stele dated 411 (Fig. 5.38a) and also seen in the “dancing deva” statue from Tumshuk (Fig. 4.50). The somewhat softer shaping of the head and features, including the shallow pod-shaped eyes, also distinguishes the Group 20 image from the three Buddhas of Group 23. Such softer forms and slight sense of looser line can probably be linked to styles of around 415-420, as also witnessed in the seated bronze Buddha in the Rietberg Museum (Fig. 5.42) probably dating around that time.

The mandorla of Buddha (B) is also related to those of the three Buddhas of Group 23 and Group 21. A row of fairly large white pearls and narrow white lines is painted between the rims of the mandorla and also in the head halo.

### 3. *Group 20: Seated Ascetic Buddha (C)*

To the east of the dhyānāsana Buddha (B) is a seated ascetic figure (C), probably the Buddha Śākyamuni during his austerities (Figs. 5.57, 5.61, 5.62). It is a rare sculpture of this type from this period in China. Others are known in the wall paintings of Kizil: Cave 76 of ca. 400 (Fig. 5.63a) and Cave 212 of ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.63b).<sup>84</sup> An emaciated torso fragment is known from Temple “D” at Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk<sup>85</sup> and there are a number of examples of the fasting Buddha from Gandhāra.<sup>86</sup> An example wearing Buddha robes (rather than the Bodhisattva garb) appears in the East Cave at Chin-t’a ssu near Chang-yeh in central Kansu, which will be discussed in Vol. IV. The Group 20 figure is garbed in a manner similar to the ascetic Śākyamuni images known from Gandhāra, that is, with a dhoti and scarf rather than with the saṅghātī robe, though the statue does have the Buddha’s uṣṇīsa. The body is fairly abstractly fashioned with prominently patterned rib cage, flat, sunken plane for the abdomen, and stylized deep lines for the wasted muscles and bone structure. The manner of portraying the rib cage and bony shoulders, arms and feet is very similar to the style used in the painting of the old monk, possibly Mahākāśyapa, in the Parinirvāṇa scene from Cave 48 at Kizil (Fig. 5.64), dated in Vol. II to 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>87</sup> Both have a compact alignment of the narrow ribs and harsh, dividing lines for the breast bone, neck tendons and muscle and arm bone. Similar linear styles appears in the fasting Buddha of Kizil Cave 76 and Cave 212 (Figs. 5.63a, b), though the latter is fancier and more detailed in patterning. The patterning of the Group 20 ascetic Śākyamuni Buddha (C) is probably closest to that of the Kizil Cave 48 monk image.

The face of the ascetic Buddha (C) is unusually expressive with sharp planes for the gaunt cheeks and bony chin. The eyes are given a sense of hollowness of the socket and the mouth is sensitive yet sharply cut, imparting a quality of serious determination and fortitude. The mouth shape is quite similar to that of the 424 Amitāyus (Fig. 6.10a). This style face would seem to prefigure the famous monk’s head in Cave 18 at Yün-kang which shows similar sensitivity in the depiction of gauntness by using abstract, sharply juxtaposed planes.

The scarf stands up stiffly around the shoulders and curves upwards behind the neck, similar to the manner of the Cave 169 Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.40. It is not a semicircular shape as seen in the Bodhisattvas of the Group 6 niche of ca. 424 (Fig. 6.14b, 6.15b). The dhoti uses the

<sup>84</sup> See Rhie (2002), fig. 3.43b. Also CKMSCC, painting, Vol. 16, fig. 56 (in color).

<sup>85</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 3.44b.

<sup>86</sup> Such as from Shotorak in Afghanistan. See Rhie (2002), fig. 3.45b.

<sup>87</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 719 and 669.

relatively widely spaced parallel incised lines current among the other images of Group 20, but it has a regularly pleated hem around the exposed foot (possibly the ends of the scarf winding up over the leg) and a stylized short pleated overlap at the waist. The particular patterning of the overlap in repetitive chunky pleats is close to the mode used in the hem design of the two donor paintings in Kizil Cave 118, dated in Vol. II to early 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup> A fancier form of this motif appears in the black stone stupa fragment from Chiu-ch'üan of ca. 430 (Fig. 5.65). A similar motif appears in the Group 3 Vajrapāṇi in the North Wall of Cave 169 (Fig. 7.55), but it is closer to the ca. 430 black stone stupa fragment than to the Group 20 ascetic Buddha. From all these elements, it would appear that the Group 20 ascetic Buddha (C) dates between the time of Kizil Cave 118 and the black stone fragment of ca. 430. Its more direct antecedents seem to be the Kizil artistic style as seen in Caves 48 and 76. It can plausibly date ca. 415-420, as noted with Buddha (A) of Group 20.

The identity of this image would certainly appear to be Śākyamuni, the only Buddha known to have this kind of ascetic form. This is a major factor in uncovering the possible identification of this set of five Buddhas, and will become a primary object of the study presented in Chapter 8 below with regard to the iconography of the five Buddhas as developed in the Gandhāra and Haḍḍa regions around the 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### 4. Group 20: Standing Buddha (D)

Next to the ascetic figure towards the east there remains the upper body of a Buddha (D) (Fig. 5.61). This image is considerably smaller than the others of this group, but its height is approximately the same as the seated Buddhas (the tops of the heads are all at the same general level). The lower part of the body is totally missing, so it is hard to confirm, but it was probably a standing Buddha with his right arm hanging down (probably grasping the hem of his robe) and with left hand holding an edge of the robe against his chest in a manner similar to that of the Group 18 standing Buddha (Fig. 4.7). It is also possible that it was seated with legs pendant (bhadrāsana). Stylistically, the incised line technique appears bold and a bit coarse and there are fine lines in the hair on the cranium, which is unusual among the images of this cave, though such lines do appear in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription Buddha of ca. 375 A.D. (Fig. 2.4). The Buddha (D) sculpture does not appear to be fashioned by the same hand as the others in this group and it is possible that it is a repaired or replacement image. However, even so, the spacing is correct with regard to the group as a whole, thus affirming that there would originally have been an image in that location.

#### 5. Group 20: Seated Buddha (E)

The last image of the group is another dhyānāsana Buddha (E). Though mostly damaged, the head and chest are quite well preserved (Figs. 5.61, 5.66a, b). Both shoulders are covered with the saṅghātī, which has a thick twisted cowl and strong, rather wide and coarse parallel incised fold lines. The end of the saṅghātī over the left shoulder has a wavy outer edge, different from the straight edges of the three Buddhas of Group 23, and the Buddhas of Group 22 and 21. This style seems close to that of the images of Group 14 of the North Wall (Fig. 7.47), but not as boldly portrayed. The round head with plain hair and uṣṇīṣa has rather simple and soft features with similar gentle, long, pod-shaped eyes as seen in others of Group 20 (Fig. 5.66b).

<sup>88</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 4.49q, r and pp. 719 and 658.

The plain hair, rounded *uṣṇīṣa*, long eyes and gentle face have some remarkable affinity with the styles of some images at the Yün-kang caves in northeastern China, such as the stone Buddha head in Fig. 5.67 dating ca. 480's. This again points to strong associations of the sculpture of the Northern Wei in the 2nd half of the 5th century with that of the early 5th century Buddhist art in Kansu, a factor which could lead to confusing the two as one style and to possibly dating the Kansu materials to the later 5th century. However, essential differences separate the two; the Kansu images in Cave 169 that we have been discussing have a naive naturalism which the bolder and more abstract images of the later 5th century under the N. Wei are lacking, although they appear to be in a direct lineage from the styles of the Kansu region. This phenomenon occurs time and again in regard to the relation of early 5th century works and the later 5th century Northern Wei sculptures, which in general become both more complex and more boldly abstract.

#### 6. *Group 20: Dating*

Certain elements noted above seem to suggest that the Group 20 figures were executed a little before the Group 6 images of ca. 424. Other elements point to similarities with the Sian stele dated 411 A.D. and to compatible styles with the paintings of Kizil Cave 48 and 76 in particular. These indications suggest a dating possibly around 410-420. They seem to date later than the three Buddhas of Group 23 and the Group 22 images. Group 21 is more difficult to assess, but partakes of similar stylistic elements as the Group 20 images, though clearly by a different hand and not having any of the more experimental details as the Group 20 images. It would appear that the making of the South Wall images progressed from top to bottom, with the Group 20 images being the latest, and dating prior to the important North Wall Group 6 images with the 424 inscription.

#### 7. *Iconographic Considerations: More on the Five Buddhas*

Though it may have been by chance that five Buddhas remain in Group 20 (and also in Group 23), but it is equally possible that the five Buddhas are the original intent in both cases. It has been noted with regard to Group 23 that there does not appear to be enough space to add more than the five to the group of three plus two *dhyānāsana* Buddhas. Though there may have been sufficient space in Group 20, there is one compelling factor that points to the group as originally being five. The central image, the ascetic Śākyamuni, is situated in a clear depression that emulates a shallow niche, but the other images, two on each side, do not have such a pronounced depression, which is clearly visible in Fig. 5.57. This would seem to give a precedence to the central image and suggest that the two images to each side were meant to balance the composition. There could have been perhaps another image added to each end to make seven Buddhas, but then it is likely that there would be some surviving indication of at least one of them, which there is not.

If there were seven or even ten images, then the iconography is clearly the seven Buddhas of the past and the ten are the ten-direction Buddhas. But it is not so clear what the iconography of the five Buddhas would be, which appears to be the case for Group 20. This point has already been briefly discussed with the five *dhyānāsana* Buddhas of Group 16 on the West Wall (Fig. 4.25a), a group which is reasonably certain to have been only five. There they are all similarly *dhyānāsana* Buddhas, though with some slight distinction in size. In the case of the five Buddhas of Group 23 (Figs. 5.30a, b), the three at the left are stylistically different from the two at the right. This could have been intentional and

have some significance, or possibly not. If it were significant, then the split of three and two might have some meaning. There will be more discussion of this point later.

With regard to Group 20, there is a more marked difference between the five Buddhas than in either of the other cases seen so far in Cave 169 (Fig. 5.57). Here there are three dhyanāsana Buddhas, one ascetic Buddha and one (presumably) standing Buddha. Each one has a distinctively different garb and appearance, making them all individualistic rather than homogeneous or repetitively similar. There could be several reasons for this; the imagery may be following different iconography, or for some reason there is increasing interest focused on the individual differences among the five, probably for identification purposes so the viewers of these images would be able to name them.

We have already noted the important text of the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* (*Hsien-chieh ching*) first translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 300 (or 291) A.D. Here there are many sections dealing with the thousand Buddhas of this “Good Eon” (Bhadrakalpa), including the naming of all the thousand Buddhas and the detailed information concerning the parents, main disciple, length of the Dharma teaching, and so on, of each one. Here the first five Buddhas are: Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya. The *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* is one plausible source for the appearance of a five Buddha set in early Chinese Buddhist art, namely, that of Tai K’uei’s five Buddhas of the Wa-kuan ssu in Chien-k’ang, and the five Buddha configurations that we are now studying in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu.

If this text is the source of the iconography of these works, then the question arises how to identify the various Buddhas. The likely way would be to read them in order from the right (or the left). In this case, if read in either direction, the central Buddha would be Kāśyapa. If we could not distinguish Maitreya from the others, then the others are not possible to identify without some further information. In the case of Group 20, however, we seem to certainly have Śākyamuni as the central Buddha and not Kāśyapa. This would mean that the order is not read linearly either from the right or from the left and that there must be some other principle at work. This principle is difficult to fathom for this case; it may even be a different principle than the one used for the line of similar dhyanāsana Buddhas, which are not only seen in Group 16, but also in some Gandhāran art. Interestingly, there are also examples from Gandhāra that show five Buddhas with some variation. In the example in Fig. 5.68 there are four standing Buddhas and the center Buddha is seated with the dharmachakra mudrā. In this case it would most likely be Śākyamuni in the center, just like in the Group 20 row. We still, however, have no idea how to read the other four, and possibly there were originally more images, since this piece is a fragment. From an examination of Gandhāran art it becomes evident that the five Buddha configurations appear with some frequency during the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, and that the Buddhas in those cases appear to have a variety of modes of arrangement. We will investigate this subject in both Gandhāra (and related regions) and China in Chapter 8, which offers a study of the iconography of the five Buddhas in Gandhāra and Haḍḍa and then returns to assess the probable identifications of the sets of five Buddhas in early Chinese Buddhist art, including those in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169.

#### D. Summary Conclusions (South Wall)

The investigation of the images of the South Wall as presented above indicates that the order of make in general seems to proceed from the upper levels to the lower level. The earliest works appear to be the stone Buddha and the painted stupas. Though there is a problem in interpreting the P’ing-shen inscription with regard to the existing images, it remains a moot problem at present. Even if images of

this area of the South Wall were restored, the inscription makes clear that the restoration was in accord with existing forms. Stylistically, the three east Buddhas of the group of five Buddhas of Group 23, appear to belong to the period between 400 and 420, with a likelihood of dating ca. 410-415. The two west Buddhas of this group are probably from around the same time, though certainly by a different hand. The Group 22 triad is an important remains that shows the developments of the standing Buddha and Bodhisattva styles in Cave 169 between the Group 18 and 17 images of the West Wall and those of the North Wall of the mid-420's to be discussed below. The mandorlas are an important indicator of the evolving style of mandorla designs, probably later than the style of the mandorla of the stone Buddha torso of Group 23 and the more elaborate mandorlas of the North Wall Groups 6, 7, etc. The Group 22 triad probably dates ca. 410-415. The images of Group 21 are a somewhat simplified version of the Group 23 three east Buddhas, perhaps dating after the Group 22 triad and before the Group 20 images below, which appear to date around 415-420, before the style of the Group 6 images of ca. 424. Some new elements of motif configuration suggest new ideas that prefigure the more elegant rendering in the 424 Amitāyus niche.

The imagery of the South Wall thus appears to have been made over the years from around 400-420 and to follow the general layout from upper levels to lower levels. These images are all somewhat similar in overall technique and style, using the particular type of parallel incised linear technique of drapery depiction. One might think that this style was a prevailing one during the first two decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and may reflect some of the styles of the Ch'ang-an area during the period of Yao Hsing of the Later Ch'in, which was a flourishing period in Kuan-chung (Ch'ang-an area) for Buddhism with the presence of Kumārajīva. The Ch'ang-an area doubtless experienced a renaissance of Buddhist art at that time, which may well have exerted some impact on the artistic styles of the Buddhist art of the Western Ch'in as seen at Ping-ling ssu. Certainly there are connections known in the monk's records to indicate that Ping-ling ssu, along with Mai-chi shan, were favored retreat areas for serious meditating monks, including Tao-jung, whose name is linked with the east wall thousand Buddha panel and also with the ca. 424 paintings of Group 6 on the North Wall, as will be discussed further below. Sources beyond the Ch'ang-an area that are revealed in the images of the South Wall are mainly in relation to the surviving art of the Kucha and Tumshuk area, and also possibly with the Khotan area, all of which were flourishing sites on the Silk Roads of Central Asia at this time. The period after 412, when the Western Ch'in capital was moved to Fu-han, near Ping-ling ssu, was one of success and prosperity under the rulership of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (r. 412-428) when the kingdom reached its greatest strength and prestige.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CAVE 169: NORTH WALL (I)

Among the three walls of this cave, that of the north (right) side contains some of the finest sculpture in the cave, the Amitāyus triad niche, extremely important inscriptions, rare and important wall paintings (some of which are identified by inscription), the remains of a copied sutra, and most of the latest work surviving in the cave (Fig. 6.1). There are 14 Groups identified by the Chinese on the North Wall (Fig. 6.2). These groups appear to have less of a cohesive, overall plan with respect to the entire wall in the arrangements of the niches and painting configurations than seen on the other walls. This could be partially due to the difficulty presented by the irregular wall surface, which is more uneven and steeper than the other walls and not the best for the construction of images.<sup>1</sup> The South Wall gives the impression of the most orderly composition in horizontal zones; the West Wall seems to have basically two major groupings and is the main wall of the cave; but the North Wall has a scattered appearance of isolated independent small groups of sculpture, though there is some cohesion in the wall paintings. As in the previous chapters, each area and group will be examined individually in detail and then discussed in relation to the whole wall and the whole cave in Chapter 7.

#### I. NORTH (RIGHT) WALL: UPPER ZONE

The upper zone includes Groups 1-4 (Fig. 6.2). The eastern side of the North Wall has a large slope which is somewhat separate and apart from the main floor. It contains a large screen niche with a triad (Group 3), which is isolated from the main groups of the North Wall and will be discussed below in Chapter 7, following Group 14.

##### A. *Group 1*

On the western side of the uppermost zone of the North Wall there is a niche with the remains of two seated clay Buddha sculptures, known as Group 1 (Fig. 6.3). This group is positioned in a very difficult space high on the wall at the rear (Figs. 6.1, 6.2). A platform of wood beams and planks that serves to hold the sculptures was constructed across a large fissure in the wall. Some other beams appear at the right (facing), probably for supporting other images originally (Fig. 6.3). The remains of part of a third mandorla at the right supports this suggestion. So this group is likely to have been a row of seated Buddhas, at least three Buddhas, but possibly more. The sculptures are not stone core construction, but made of clay with a clay back screen (H. 67 cm. [26.3 in.]). This technique is later than the stone core images of Group 18.<sup>2</sup>

The two presently remaining seated Buddhas were probably in *dhyānāsana*. Both are of the same size (H. 47 cm [18½ in.]). The heads of each are quite well preserved, unlike the bodies, which are

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<sup>1</sup> Teng (1994), catalogue by Deng Yü-hsiang and Wang Heng-t'ung, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang dates Group 1 with the sculptures of Group 18 of the West Wall, which he considers to be early in this cave. Teng (1994), p. 20.



nearly all ruined. The heads are round with plain hair and the face has small features. The style of the faces is relatively similar to the face of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.40) and to the Group 22 images (Figs. 5.44, 5.45), but perhaps they are most similar to the head of the seated wooden Buddha sculpture from Cave 76 at Kizil, dated in Vol. II to ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 6.4).<sup>3</sup> The drapery shows a rounded, slightly raised cowl that sweeps over the left shoulder with refined, narrowly spaced, parallel incised lines. The cowl and the drape over the left shoulder are presented in a raised, rounded shape that complements the smooth, somewhat flattened shape of the left arm. This manner of forming the cowl and drape and the delicate parallel incised lines relates to the technique of the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.26a) of ca. 385-400, which is a style somewhat related to the Tumshuk Toqquz-Sarai Temple "I" sculptures (Fig. 4.31) and can be seen in sculptures dated in Vol. II to around the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, including the Asian Art Museum Kuan-shih-yin (Fig. 4.35). In the smooth shaping of the body, these two Group 1 Buddhas have some resemblance to the treatment of form in the painting of the master in the Koguryō tomb at Tōkhungri dated 408/409 (Fig. 4.34). Even the small features of the faces of each are similar. It would appear that these two Buddhas stylistically relate to the early images of the West Wall of the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century or possibly slightly later. Group 1 appears to have been among the earliest works of the North Wall, and also early among the surviving Cave 169 images. These two seated Buddhas seem to be examples of some of the earliest Cave 169 images made completely of the wood and clay technique.

The two mandorlas are quite well preserved. They are composed of a large circular head halo and nearly circular body halo. This is generally similar to the mandorla configurations of Group 16, Group 23 (three eastern Buddhas) and Group 22, though each one has a different design. These mandorlas do not have the unifying outer mandorla shape as seen in the Group 6 and 7 mandorlas (Figs. 6.8a, 7.16b), which essentially creates an encompassing mandorla shape that contains a discrete body and head halo within it. The Group 1 images only have the discrete head and body halos and not the surrounding encompassing outer mandorla unit. The outer rim of both the head and body halos have a simple, repetitive, wavy type flame pattern and plain inner bands of malachite green, red and white. This type of flame pattern is seen in other halos throughout this cave (Groups 22, 6, 7, 9), but the whole configuration is relatively simple and without elaborate figural forms, pearl motifs and the like. The repetitive, wavy flame pattern also appears in the mandorla (the actual remains now only seen in part of the body halo) of the seated Buddha of GK Cave 20 at Kumtura (Kucha), dated in Vol. II to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> or ca. 400 (Fig. 5.59a);<sup>4</sup> however, the wavy flames are individually outlined in black, a more developed mode of presentation. GK Cave 20 is an important cave with respect to other features in some of the Cave 169 north wall images, including the sculptures of Group 6 and the paintings of Groups 11-13.

Between the two mandorlas, which overlap at the sides, appears the painting of the upper body of a Bodhisattva type figure with circular head halo and a large, full open lotus flower (Fig. 6.3). At the left (facing) is part of a torso of a figure with bare chest and hands clasped in worship (Fig. 6.3). The style of these paintings relates somewhat to that of Group 6 and Group 11, though not exactly the same, but these Group 1 paintings are probably earlier. The outlines are rather thick and dark, but not as bold and vigorous as the brush lines of the Group 11 paintings. Nor is it as refined as the painting style of the Group 6 wall paintings of ca. 424. The painting style is also close to that of the Tōkhungri wall paintings (Fig. 4.34) of ca. 408/409. These mandorlas and fragments of figure painting are important

<sup>3</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 694-695.

<sup>4</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 708, 714.

remains that probably show the rather early style of painting in Cave 169, that is, ca. 400, the likely date for the sculptures as well.

### B. Group 2

Between Group 1 and Group 2 the rock wall is vertically steep and smooth, without any construction holes (Fig. 6.1). Both Group 1 and Group 2 seem to have used the spaces provided by large cracks in the wall surface to build the wood and clay screen type of niche. Group 2 presently consists of two seated images of differing sizes (H. 1.3 and .86 m [4 ¼ ft. and 2 ¾ ft.]) with a back screen of H. 90 cm x W. 140 cm [3 ft. x 4½ ft.]. A wooden beam coated in clay sticks out of the cliff between the two images where there is a gaping hole (Fig. 6.6). A black ink (graffiti?) inscription is written across the body halo of the left (facing) seated Buddha stating that this image was made (offered) whole heartedly (i-hsin) by Kang Fu-hsi 康伏奚 of T'ien-shui 天水 in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of T'ien-pao (T'ien-pao shih-san tsai 天寶十三載, T'ien-shui chün jen K'ang Fu-hsi i-hsin kung-yang 天水郡人康伏奚一心供養), which is 754 A.D. in the T'ang dynasty (Fig. 6.5).<sup>5</sup> This is likely to have been added later; there are other T'ien-pao period graffiti inscriptions in this cave on images that are clearly earlier. Possibly there was some later repair and repainting to Group 2 at that time.

The style of the large Buddha in Fig. 6.5 is heavier than that of the Group 1 Buddhas (Fig. 6.3), but it does not appear to be as boldly massive as the Group 7 Buddha (Fig. 7.16c) nor as refined as the Group 6 seated Amitāyus (Figs. 6.9a, b), both discussed below. The cowl neckline of the outer robe of the Group 2 Buddha has a twisted shape and the incised lines on the remaining part of the garment are somewhat irregular, both of which are somewhat unusual styles, but not unknown among the Cave 169 sculptures. For example, the waist band of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva of ca. 400 has a similar twist with slanted incised lines, as does the cowl of the Buddha (E) of Group 20 (Fig. 5.66a). The face is quite close to that of the Group 6 Contemplative Bodhisattva and appears to predate the head style of the Group 6 Amitāyus of 424 (or 420). The Group 2 Buddha is likely to have been made between ca. 400 and 420, perhaps ca. 410. The smaller image of Group 2 (a seated Buddha) appears to have a shape similar to that of the two seated Buddhas of Group 1, but it is difficult to make out this figure. Group 2 would appear to date ca. 400-410, not far removed in time from Group 1, but probably slightly later.<sup>6</sup>

### C. Group 4

Between and below Groups 1 and 2 are the stone core carved remains of the three Buddhas of Group 4 (Figs. 6.1, 6.2): one large standing Buddha at the left (facing), one smaller standing Buddha in the center, and a smaller seated dhyanāsana Buddha at the right (facing) (Fig. 6.6). Practically none of the stucco covering originally on these images remains, so only the general shape can be determined. Here and there a few patches of malachite green and white paint still adhere to the stone. Both standing Buddhas have their right arms down and the left raised against the chest in the manner seen in other standing Buddhas of the South and West Walls (Groups 18, 16, 22, and probably the standing Buddha of Group 20). Two of the three standing Buddha sculptures of Group 9 on the North Wall also use this posture (Fig. 7.25a).

<sup>5</sup> Teng (1994), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang dates this group to the 420-427 period of the Western Ch'in, but offers no reasons for the dating. Deng (1994), p. 20.

The standing Buddhas are proportionately rather heavy with thick limbs, narrow shoulders and short legs. This shape is quite different from the standing Buddhas of Group 18 and Group 22 or even the Buddha of Niche No.1. The fact that they are stone core images carved in relief within a shallow mandorla shaped niche would indeed suggest that they were from the early period in Cave 169, ca. 400 or slightly earlier. The mandorla niche of the central Buddha appears to be rounded at the top and not a pointed shape. The mandorlas of the other two figures are not distinct or are partially broken. There is some resemblance in the shaping of the narrow shoulders and shorter proportions with the Seiryōji Shaka image, said to be the copy of the famous Udayana image brought by Kumārajīva,<sup>7</sup> and with the rounded and bulky form seen in the painting of the master in the Tōkhungri tomb painting in North Korea dated 408/409 in Fig. 4.34. Probably the Group 4 standing Buddhas most resemble the standing wooden Buddha from Cave 76 at Kizil, dated in Vol. II as mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.21).<sup>8</sup> The Group 4 Buddhas may be one stylistic trend around the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century, and were perhaps early attempts at carving images on the North Wall. The dhyānāsana Buddha at the right (facing) of this group appears generally similar to the dhyānāsana Buddhas of Group 18 (Fig. 4.23).

The group possibly represents the Buddhas of the Three Ages (Past, Present and Future). There are several other possible groups of three Buddhas in Cave 169, including the standing Buddhas of Group 7, Group 9 and Group 16. Both Group 7 and 16 are now incomplete with only two remaining images. Though three images remain in Group 9, one may have been repaired or a later replacement. The interesting feature about the Group 4 three Buddhas is their individuality of size and even positioning, which is unlike later, more regularized, renderings of the three Buddhas.

The fact that two of the three Buddhas in both Groups 4 and 9 have lowered right arms suggests that this position is not relegated to only one particular Buddha as a distinguishing feature, as it can pertain to at least two, presumably different Buddhas. This arm position seems to apply to Śākyamuni Buddha in Group 18 (see Chapter 4), but it is used in the standing bronze Buddha in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Fig. 4.10, identified by inscription as Maitreya and probably dating in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century (before ca. 430's). We shall also see it used for the colossal Buddha of Cave 18 at Yün-kang in ca. 460's. This form for the standing Buddha is apparently of some consequence in the early phases of Chinese Buddhist art. It occurs in some images of the Gandhāra and Hadda region, such as some standing stucco Buddhas on the main stupa at Jauliān, Taxila (Fig. 8.5i), and it appears in a few examples from Rawak Style VI (dated independently to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> or first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century), including the one in Fig. 5.47.<sup>9</sup> Several of the wooden sculptures probably dating from ca. mid or third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century from the group found in Cave 76 (Peacock Cave) at Kizil also have the lowered right arm.<sup>10</sup> The Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 sculptures may represent the period of its greatest usage in China and it may well have emerged around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and continued through the early Yün-kang stage before essentially phasing out of usage in China, except for some very specialized icons of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and later.<sup>11</sup> There may also be a regional component to this configuration in China, as it is not seen in the known images of central and western Kansu of the Sixteen Kingdoms period.

<sup>7</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.73a.

<sup>8</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 697.

<sup>9</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 312.

<sup>10</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 706-707; figs. 4.77 and 4.78.

<sup>11</sup> There may be an interesting later corollary to this iconography, as this posture is used for the famous colossal miraculous image of Kansu, the so-called Lui Sa-ho Buddha. It is also used to represent Śākyamuni on the Vulture Peak (i.e., the *Lotus Sutra*) in T'ang times. See Chapter 4, note 84.

The iconography of the Buddhas of the Three Times (Present, Past and Future) appears to have been known in Gandhāran art (see Chapter 8) and it eventually becomes a dominant form in Chinese art by the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> The examples in Cave 169 are among the earliest, if not the earliest, surviving probable examples in Chinese Buddhist art. This iconography ultimately rose to a favored position in China, along with that of the thousand Buddhas. The identity of the three is not always clear, however, except for Śākyamuni and Maitreya. The Buddha representing the Past could be Kāśyapa or possibly Dīpaṃkara (who was especially popular in Bāmiyān and Afghanistan). Inscriptions on Stupa D5 at the monastery of Jauliān in Taxila (Gandhāra) of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century suggest that Kāśyapa was the Buddha of the Past in that region (see Chapter 8 discussion of Stupa D5 and its inscriptions).

The form and composition of the Group 4 images, which have a clear hierarchy from large to small, suggests a possible “chronological” or “linear” time line as the main organizing principle of identification. In that case, the smallest (at the far right) is probably the Past, the medium size image in the center may then be the Present (Śākyamuni), and the largest one at the far left is the Future (Maitreya). This would also be an order commensurate with the circumambulatory direction. However, it could be read the reverse way or even a non-linear way. One interesting feature of all the groups of possible Buddhas of the Three Ages is that each have two Buddhas who resemble each other or are somehow paired by stylistic criteria, by hand positions, or simply by survival of two images (with the third one in doubt). If these are considered paired Buddhas, it is likely the pair would be Śākyamuni and Maitreya.

In conclusion, this interesting group of stone core Buddhas of Group 4 probably date around 400 and are early representations of the Buddhas of the Three Ages, a theme that is present in many of the Mahāyāna sutras translated into Chinese prior to ca. 400, including the *Lotus Sutra*, which appears to have been popular in Cave 169 in its early phase, as indicated by the Group 18 ensemble and the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting. The Group 1 Buddhas in clay also appear to be early and are also perhaps a representation of the three Buddhas (three halos exist though there are only two surviving images), or part of a scheme of multiple Buddhas, of which only these two survive.

## II. NORTH WALL: MIDDLE ZONE

The horizontal middle section of the North Wall contains Groups 5, 6 and 7 (Figs. 6.2, 6.7). Groups 6 and 7 are among the finest and most important works, not only in Cave 169, but in all of early Chinese Buddhist art. Group 5 with the remains of a standing Buddha, a seated bhadrāsana Buddha, and a vertical row of three dhyānāsana Buddhas, all tucked in behind the Group 6 niche, dates from the late Northern Wei period<sup>13</sup> and will not be addressed here. It is interesting, however, to note that the standing Buddha of Group 5 retains the gestures so popular in the early standing Buddha images of Cave 169. This may have been a local tradition for a time.

### A. Group 6: Niche with Amitāyus Sculpture Triad

This niche with sculptures, wall paintings and inscriptions is unquestionably one of the most important in all early Chinese Buddhist art. It is well preserved and both the sculptures and paintings are inestimable legacies for the chronological and iconographic study of early 5<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist art,

<sup>12</sup> There is further discussion of the iconography of the Buddhas of the Three Times below in Chapter 8.

<sup>13</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang dates Group 5 to ca. 499-503 in the Northern Wei. Teng (1994), p. 21.

especially in Kansu, but also with much wider implications. Its discovery in 1963<sup>14</sup> caused a stir of excitement throughout the scholarly world of Chinese art history when it was realized that it dated by inscription to 420 (or 424—see discussion of the main inscription below) in the Western Ch'in, thus a major evidence affirming the existence of important Buddhist art from this early period in the cave temples of Kansu. This discovery virtually opened up for reassessment the Chinese Buddhist art prior to the Yün-kang cave period in the Northern Wei and led to numerous pioneer studies as well as renewed vigor in studying the art of the remains in the Kansu region from the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms, a subject to which this present series of books hopes to offer a contribution.

This niche is located at the west side of the North Wall underneath a ledge which fortuitously acts as a kind of covering or ceiling for the niche and has afforded some protection through the centuries (Figs. 6.1, 6.7, 6.8a and color Pl. V). The clay backing wall of the niche is directly against the rock wall surface for the main image and the left attendant, but creates a projecting wall screen set at an oblique angle away from the wall for the backing of the Buddha's right attendant. The size of the niche is 1.7 m high, 1.5 m wide and .76 m deep [H. 5½ x W. nearly 5 x D. 2½ feet]. This niche is part of the ensemble related to the large inscription panel at the right of the niche (Fig. 6.7), which bears a date of Chien-hung 建弘 first year, Hsüan-hsiao 玄枵 (date based on the stations of Jupiter) in the Western Ch'in. The *nien hao* of Chien-hung first year (420) and the Jupiter cycle date of Hsüan-hsiao (424) do not match, causing a controversy with regard to the exact date. This issue will be studied in full below in Chapter 7, section A.2, where it is shown that 424 is the most plausible date. In either case, however, this niche dates ca. 420-424, a close enough range to still make the niche an incredibly valuable resource.

The three sculptures of this niche, a seated dhyānāsana Buddha with two standing attendant Bodhisattvas, are made of clay with straw bundles as support. They are nearly perfectly preserved, including much of the original color (white, black, malachite green and red). The nearly life-size dhyānāsana Buddha (H. 1.55 m [5 ft.]), the main image of the niche, is identified as Wu-liang-shou fo 無量壽佛 (Amitāyus Buddha) by a colophon inscription in black ink on a white vertical strip just above the mandorla on the Buddha's left (Fig. 6.8a). The Bodhisattva standing at the Buddha's right side (H. 1.18 m [3.87 ft.]) is identified as "□Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa" □觀世音菩薩 (Avalokiteśvara) by the black ink writing on the colophon located between the Buddha's mandorla and that of this Bodhisattva at the level of the Bodhisattva's top knot of hair and observable in the far upper right corner of Fig. 6.14a and color Pl. VI. The standing Bodhisattva on the Buddha's left (H. 1.11 m [3.64 ft.]) is identified by colophon inscription as "Te-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa" 得大勢至菩薩 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) located at the juncture of the image's mandorla and that of Amitāyus (Figs. 6.8a, 6.15a, b). These identifications are extremely important evidences for the study of iconography in early Chinese Buddhist art. By 424 (or 420) A.D. all of the major sutras on Amitābha/Amitāyus had been translated into Chinese, with the possible exception of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* 觀無量壽佛經 (*Sutra on the Visualization of the Buddha Amitāyus*, commonly referred to as the *Kuan ching* 觀經 or Meditation Sutra).<sup>15</sup> The presence of the Group 6 Amitāyus triad indicates the popularity of the Amitābha/Amitāyus worship in the region of the Western Ch'in around 424 (or 420), possibly influenced by the prominence of Amitābha/

<sup>14</sup> Chang Pao-hsi, "Chien-hung t'i-ch'i chi ch'i yu kuan wen t'i te kao shih" (Consideration of the Chien-hung Inscription and Related Problems), *Tun-huang yen-chiu*, 1992, No. 1, p. 11. Also see the summary chronology of the discovery of Cave 169 in the introduction to Ping-ling ssu in Chapter 3 above.

<sup>15</sup> This sutra was translated by Kālayāśas at Chien-k'ang under the [Liu] Sung sometime in the period 424-442. There will be more extensive discussion of this sutra below in section II.A.2.c., no. 17).



Amitāyus in South China that was generated earlier by the great master Hui-yüan (died ca. 416) at Lu shan and his disciples.<sup>16</sup> The complex issue regarding the texts related to the Group 6 sculptures and paintings will be studied further following the analysis of the images.

### 1. *Image Analysis*

We will begin our extensive consideration of this important Group 6 niche with the analysis of the sculpture and its stylistic relation to various artistic sources. This will be followed by pertinent textual and iconographic studies related to this Amitāyus triad.

#### a. *Buddha Amitāyus*

The figure of the Amitāyus sits with dhyanā mudrā cross-legged on an oval lotus seat (Figs 6.8a, b). The image is elegant in its proportions with a tall, narrow torso, broad shoulders, and long, slender arms. The crossed legs do not show the feet and are only moderately wide, thusly minimizing the horizontal emphasis in favor of the impression of height. The smooth, hard planes of the body and its hourglass torso shape showing the slanting planes of the abdomen are distinctive features of this figural style. The sense of a clearly revealed, elegant body structure with long torso and slanting abdomen seems to have reached a point of perfection in this image. When compared to the other examples of seated Buddhas in Cave 169 which depict a similar kind of exposure of the torso with a slanted abdomen, that is, the abhayā mudrā Buddha in Group 24 (the central panel in the thousand Buddha painting of the East Wall in Figs. 5.8a, b) of ca. 400-410, and Buddha (A) in Group 20 on the South Wall (Fig. 5.58) of ca. 415-420, the development of this style of torso culminating in the refined style of the Group 6 Amitāyus is evident. There are naturally other factors to consider, such as the differences in artists and medium, but in general the Amitāyus image can be understood as a fully evolved example of this classic style executed by a master hand.

This particular form of torso depiction is most typical of images of the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century from Buddhist sites of the Northern Silk Route in Central Asia. Notably, it is common among the early wall paintings of Kizil in Caves 118, 83 and 84, 38 and continuing into Caves 48, 47, 77, 76, 212 and 14, 114 and even later (See Vol. II). The form also appears in numerous sculptures of that period, including quite a few of the small wooden sculptures from Kizil Cave 76 (Peacock Cave) now preserved in the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin<sup>17</sup> and the wooden Buddha from Korla, which has the similar subtle shaping of the shoulder that also appears in the Group 6 Amitāyus (Fig. 6.9a).<sup>18</sup> The preponderance of occurrences of the particular figural shape with tall torso, sharply angled waist and slanted abdomen among Northern Silk Route images of the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century would tend to suggest that it is a dominant style of that area. It also, however, appears in the figures of Style IV at Rawak, such as those smaller sculptures mixed among the large Style I sculptures on the south side of the inner enclosure wall (Fig. 6.9b). This style of torso may somehow be a reflection of artistic modes current in Sassanian Persia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as witnessed in some silver and gold plates (Fig. 6.9c). It seems certain that ca. 420/424 there was at least one definite trend towards a slender elegance in

<sup>16</sup> See Rhie (2002), chapter 1.

<sup>17</sup> Including the cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva from Cave 76, the seated Buddha from Cave 60 and small seated Buddhas from Cave 76. See Rhie (2002), figs. 4.69c, 4.71b, 4.73, 4.75a and 4.76a.

<sup>18</sup> This image was discussed in Vol. II, Rhie (2002), pp. 844-845, where it was related to images in China, including the 424 (or 420) Amitāyus, and some sculptures from the Kucha area and other Northern Silk Route sites. The image was dated on the basis of those comparisons to "within the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century."



proportion, hard, smooth planes, refinement and delicacy in the style. Its permutations may best be traced through the seated Buddha depictions in the early wall paintings of Kizil and in sculpture such as the Korla wooden Buddha (Fig. 6.9a) and the clay Buddha of Kumtura GK Cave 20 (Fig. 5.59a).

The saṅghāṭī of the Group 6 Amitāyus, though covering both shoulders, drops low into the lap to expose the full shape of the torso, almost like an open coat. This is the “half sling” mode as it is utilized with the dhyanā mudrā posture (rather than with the abhayā mudrā posture) (Fig. 4.15h). Its occurrence in the Group 6 Amitāyus appears to be the earliest among the Cave 169 images and may be a part of what appears to be a fresh style coming into Cave 169 around the time of this Group 6 niche. It is a mode, as we shall see in Vol. IV, that is quite popular among the figures of the shih-t’a (stone stupas) of Liang chou dating from the late 420’s and 430’s and continues in usage into the middle 5<sup>th</sup> century in the sculptures of the Northern Liang in Turfan and in some Northern Wei images. A prominent and important example of this style is used in the rare surviving seated Buddha sculpture from Kumtura GK Cave 20, dated in Vol. II to ca. 400-420 (Fig. 5.59a).<sup>19</sup> However, the Kumtura image uses the raised strip fold technique, which does not appear in the Amitāyus image or any other surviving clay or stone sculpture in Cave 169. The raised strip appears to be a technique not used by the artists of Cave 169, who exclusively used the incised line technique.

The Group 6 Amitāyus reveals a mastery of controlled linear elements in the saṅghāṭī that creates tension and movement over the quiet surface of the body. The linear scheme of the folds of the saṅghāṭī, which fits tightly to the form, on the upper body is comprised of a series of widely spaced, parallel, groove-like, incised lines alternating with a thin, shallow, incised line (Fig. 6.8b). The effect of this scheme is to lessen the power of the repetitive parallel lines such as seen in the three Buddhas of Group 23 or the Group 20 Buddhas (B) and (E) (Figs. 5.33, 5.60, 5.66a). Instead, there is a rhythm of strong folds with a counterpoint of light fold lines. This scheme probably derives from the dominant rib fold alternating with a shallow crease known in the sculpture of Gandhāra of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries, but in those images the parallel folds are more closely spaced.

Deeply incised parallel lines of medium depth demarcate the folds over the legs in a gracefully curved horizontal pattern on the robe, which is drawn asymmetrically towards a point under the left hand. This asymmetry in the folds over the legs breaks the tradition of the symmetrical arrangement that dominated most of the early seated Buddha sculptures of China. The asymmetrical form continues as a popular scheme well into the 5<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the sculptures of Turfan and those produced under the Northern Wei. It may derive from examples known in Kucha (Kizil and Kumtura), as seen in Fig. 5.59a. The lower border of the saṅghāṭī of the Amitāyus image is a flat band of medium width with an incised line on the inner edge. This kind of band-like hem is shown on many of the wall paintings of Cave 169, especially in Group 24 and those on the North Wall, where the hems are distinguished by being a different color, as though showing the underside of the folded hem (Figs. 5.8a, b, 5.14a, 7.35).

The existing portion of the border of the outer robe on the Buddha’s right shoulder shows internal, parallel, vertical, incised lines and slightly rounded folds. The border over his left side has a design combining wavy, zigzag edge folds and delicate vertical scoring. This wavy pattern on the border is a design destined for considerable development in the subsequent decades of the fifth century. Slightly different, fuller, freer and more natural border folds of this type appear in the Group 20 Buddha (A) on the South Wall (Figs. 5.57, 5.58). Those may be an earlier version from which the more schematized

<sup>19</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 708, 714.

patterns, such as seen in the Group 6 Amitāyus, evolve. The sophisticated, delicate patterning of the wavy folds as seen in the Group 6 Amitāyus also appears in the images of Central Asia, such as in the clay sculpture of the Small Temple of Statues at Tumshuk-tagh<sup>20</sup> and in the Kumtura GK Cave 20 Buddha (Fig. 5.59a), both of which appear to derive from patterning known in some sculpture of Gandhāra.<sup>21</sup> Some original color still remains on the saṅghāṭi: malachite green on the borders and red on both the under side (behind the right arm) and outer surface.

The inner robe of this Amitāyus image, worn under the right arm, is particularly beautiful and retains much of its original painted textile designs. The “tortoise shell” hexagonal pattern covering the entire surface of the inner robe mostly remains fresh and vivid. Rows of blue, four-petal flowers on a red ground are framed by a six-sided hexagon composed of narrow, clay-color strips with blue dots at each angle (color Pl. V). A somewhat similar textile pattern appears at Bāmiyān in the Maitreya Bodhisattva painting on the ceiling of Cave 330.<sup>22</sup> The rather narrow border of the inner garment, which still retains its dark red pigment, is a tense, strongly defined arc with an incised line near the edge, perhaps suggesting a narrow fold. This kind of narrow, flat band with incised line at the edge also appears in the collar fold of the bronze seated Buddha in the Metropolitan Museum of Art probably dating 426 A.D. (Fig. 6.9d).<sup>23</sup>

The splendid head of the Group 6 Amitāyus Buddha (Figs. 6.10a, b) has a smooth shape, more tightly and sharply carved than the heads of the other Buddha figures in Groups 18, 23, 22, 20 (Figs. 4.7, 5.36, 5.48, 5.59, 5.66b) and even compared with the Bodhisattva of Group 17 (Fig. 4.27). In general, the head of Amitāyus Buddha has a greater sense of condensed, firm and tightened surface and is more refined, powerful and bold. Compared with the head and features of the Group 22 Buddha (Fig. 5.48) of ca. 410-415, the Amitāyus has eyes that are longer and more slanted, and a straighter nose with a relatively wide and flat nose bridge (different from the slightly curved bridge of the Group 17 Bodhisattva and the Group 23 and 22 Buddhas). The nose form of the Group 20 Buddhas is, however, similar to that of the Group 6 Amitāyus. The mouth shape of the Amitāyus is larger and more sharply cut than any of these same images. The eyes bear some resemblance to the eyes of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription bronze Buddha (Fig. 2.4), though the latter has more defined lids and lacks the fluid shape. They are large like the Khotan clay Buddha head (Fig. 5.59b), but are also more smoothly curved and without the sharp line of the pronounced eyelid. The near pristine condition of the Amitāyus Buddha’s face and its features is a wonderfully rare and remarkable occurrence.

Much of the original white coloring on the face still remains and the black (probably originally red) lines drawn on the face are strong and clear. It is a superb example of the Chinese painting technique used on clay sculptures at this time. The lines are powerful, graceful, and well controlled. The mustache is flowing and tapers skillfully to a fine point. The ūṛṇā is a rather large green circle with many tiny red

<sup>20</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 3.62a, b.

<sup>21</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.81e.

<sup>22</sup> T. Higuchi, *Bāmiyān*, Kyoto, 1983, Vol. I (plates), pl. 63.

<sup>23</sup> Since this image has raised some doubt about the date of its inscription, this feature is one which helps to establish the style of the image as compatible with a date around the time of the 424 (420) A.D. Amitāyus sculpture of Cave 169 Group 6 and therefore helps to confirm an interpretation of 426 A.D. for the reading of the date of the inscription for the Metropolitan Museum bronze Buddha. See Rhie (2002), pp. 448-452 for discussion of this image. It can be noted that in Vol. II the Romanization of the character 正 was mistakenly written as “ch’eng” instead of “cheng.” Rhie (2002), pp. 448-449. The problem of the inscription and date of this image was noted in R. Whitfield’s recent article Whitfield (2005), where he questioned the reading of the 426 A.D. date. This issue will be dealt with again in a later context, since the problems are complex and lengthy.

(now black) dots around the outer circle (Fig. 6.10b). This kind of ūṛṇā mark appears in the Khotan bronze Buddha head of ca. 200 A.D.<sup>24</sup> and is also known in the depiction of a large clay Buddha head from Turfan probably of a later 5<sup>th</sup> century date. Possibly the dots around the circumference indicate the mystical light emanating from the ūṛṇā. This may well be an attempt to portray the particularly marvelous light from the ūṛṇā of Amitāyus as specifically mentioned in texts, such as the *Wu-liang shou ching* 無量壽經 (quoted below).

The Group 6 Amitāyus Buddha sits on a broad, flat, oval lotus pod from which large lotus petals turn downward in two layers onto the slightly raised base floor of the niche (Figs. 6.8a, b). The petals on the outer row each have two long lobes (sepals?). The double lobed lotus pedestal is an elaborate design of concave and convex surfaces and provides a substantial and suitable seat for the image. This type of lotus pedestal also appears in the Group 18 Buddha (Fig. 4.7), where the petals and lobes are shorter, and in the Group 22 standing Buddha (now mostly ruined: Fig. 5.51). In the latter case, the lotus petals are not so elegant and elongated as those of the Group 6 Buddha, but are closer to the Asian Art Museum standing bronze Bodhisattva of ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.12) where the lobes are much more pronounced and less smoothly integrated into the petal than in the Group 6 pedestal. The lotus petals in the shih-t'a (stone stupas) of the late 420's and 430's show an evolution of this style (Fig. 5.65).

#### b. *Mandorla of Amitāyus*

The mandorla of the Buddha is elaborate and quite different from any of the earlier examples in Cave 169 discussed so far (Fig. 6.8a and color Pl. V). It is composed of a series of bands, described from innermost to outermost as follows: compact, rather short flame motif in white with black and gray outlines behind the shoulders of the Buddha; a ring of green color (bordered by narrow red bands on both sides—that on the right (facing) seems to be oxidizing to black) containing a white line drawing of a delicate vine rinceau; a wide rim of celestial musicians each holding or playing a musical instrument (mostly of Chinese type) and bordered on both sides by a white pearl rim (Figs. 6.11a, b); and a relatively narrow outer rim of simple, repetitive flame pattern in delicate, white, wavy flames without an outline. A complex decorative flame design appears above the mandorla rim (Fig. 6.8a). Malachite green dominates the color scheme of the mandorla and the Buddha's mandorla overlaps those of each of the attendant Bodhisattvas.

The rinceau vine design is not as complex as that in the mandorlas of the three Buddhas of Group No. 9 (Figs. 7.25a and 7.22), which appear to be a more developed style from the simpler Group 6 examples, but similar designs appear on the sides of the stone steles dated 411 and 424 from Sian discussed in Vol. II.<sup>25</sup> Such designs appear with frequency in the Northern Wei steles of the mid and later 5<sup>th</sup> century and they can also be found on the paintings of reliquary boxes from Subashi, Kucha.<sup>26</sup>

The band of celestial musicians, bordered on both sides by a band of white pearls, shows the celestial musicians with red bodies (those on the right side seem to have turned black) and a marked variety of postures, with each one sitting or flying in a different pose rather than all being repetitively the same (Figs. 6.11a, b). The postures are in general accord with the postures of celestial figures in the early caves at Kizil, such as Caves 47, 48, and 77, but without the strong muscular modeling of the Kizil type.

<sup>24</sup> This work was studied in Vol. I and dated there to ca. mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century–mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century with a distinct possibility of dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. Rhie (1999), pp. 266–269 and figs. 4.7a, b.

<sup>25</sup> The one on the stele dated 424 A.D. is the closest comparable one. See Rhie (2002), fig. 2.88c. The 411 A.D. example is in fig. 2.69c, d.

<sup>26</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 4.36a.

The long, slim bodies, outlined with black or white lines, have shapes resembling the Korla Buddha in Fig. 6.9a. It is also quite possible that the slender, wiry forms relate to styles from the South. Though they are not precisely the same as the apsaras figure appearing in the ca. 425 A.D. relief from the Wanfo ssu in Cheng-tu, Szechwan, in overall body shape there is a lot of resemblance to the sinuous, mobile figures of this relief.<sup>27</sup> The scarves with billowing, bow-shaped loops and sudden changes in thickness from very narrow to wide is a style also seen in the scarves of the flying apsaras figures in Chang-ch'ön Tomb No. 1 near the Yalu River in northern Korea discussed in Vol. II as dating ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> However, the flying posture with legs kicking up behind the flying celestial figures in Ch'ang-ch'ön Tomb No. 1 is different from the more natural positions in the Group 6 mandorla. The style of scarf representation also bears certain resemblances to the scarf depictions known from the copies of the paintings of Ku K'ai-chih (d. ca. 406), the famous painter working in Chien-k'ang, the capital of the Eastern Chin during the latter half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> The outer rim of the Buddha's mandorla with delicate, wavy, white flame patterns is similar to, but more refined than, those of the Group 1 and Group 23 mandorlas (Figs. 6.3, 5.33 and color Pl. IV).

The Buddha's large head halo overlaps the outer rim of wavy white flames on the top of the mandorla, thus forming the apex of the mandorla, which is nearly circular and is not pointed at the top (Fig. 6.8b). The painted designs of the circular head halo are mostly all lost. However, parts of the outer rim of flame patterns, which in this case are quite loosely drawn malachite and white flames with a black line contour line, still survive (Fig. 6.10a). This design is quite different from the head halo design of the large stone Buddha of Group 23 of ca. 400 (Figs. 5.19-5.21), whose flame patterns are boldly abstract, sharp and spiky compared with the flexible, nervous, vibrating effect of the flames on the head halo of the Group 6 Amitāyus. Also, here and there from the area of the middle band one can still make out the face and upper body of what must have been small dhyānāsana Buddhas. Parts of three can still be seen on each side (color Pl. V). They are shown in three-quarter view with red robes and a green background, very similar to those in the middle band of the mandorla of the standing Buddha of Group 22, except there the Buddhas are all facing forward (Fig. 5.45). Also, part of the circular center of the head halo can be seen behind the right ear as two closely spaced lines forming a band with what appears to be some lotus petals at the outer side.

Beyond the Buddha's mandorla, the upper part of the back screen of the niche has a spectacularly elaborate design in malachite green and white of long vertical plumes of irregularly shaped flame patterns that create a splendid crest for the niche (Fig. 6.8a and color Pl. V). This unusual, rather wide, crescent-shaped crest is rimmed at the top by a thin band of refined, narrow, white wavy flames outlined in black (Figs. 6.10a, 6.12a). The vertical plumes are an unusual shape, not known in other examples of early Buddhist art of China, as far as I am aware, but they may well be a precursor of the elaborate flame patterns seen later in Chinese bronze images, such as seen in one of the more developed forms in the mandorla of the seated bronze Buddha of ca. 470s in Fig. 6.13a. The Group 6 pattern has tentative forms of small semi-circles and irregular swirls suggestive of the movement of a mysterious light or aura (Fig. 6.12b). This may be an attempt to represent the mystical aura of the Buddha. In the *Buddhavaṃsa*, a text of ca. 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., in describing the details of each of the past Buddhas and Gotama Śākyamuni, concerning the latter's aura, the text quotes Gotama as follows: "The lustre

<sup>27</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 1.64d, f.

<sup>28</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 236 and fig. 1.75i.

<sup>29</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 1.36a, 1.65b.

of my fathom deep halo always rises sixteen cubits high..."<sup>30</sup> Here the Buddha's halo is specifically spoken of as light ("lustre") which has a depth of one fathom and "always rises" to a height of 16 cubits (about 24 ft.). The patterns of the Group 6 Buddha's halo must be simulating light (rather than "chi", as some have suggested) in the form of waves or patterns that suggest movement. Other texts seem to imply that this halo or aura of the Buddha has a protective character.<sup>31</sup> This beautiful mandorla with its spectacular plume can perhaps also be an attempt to portray the marvelous mandorla halo of light emanated by Amitāyus Buddha as noted in the *Wu-liang shou ching* 無量壽經:

"The majestic light of the Buddha Amitāyus is the most exalted. No other Buddha's light can match his. The light of some Buddhas illuminates a hundred Buddha-lands, and that of others, a thousand Buddha-lands. Briefly, that of Amitāyus illuminates the eastern Buddha-lands as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. In the same way, it illuminates the Buddha-lands in the south, west, and north, in each of the four intermediate directions, and above and below ... For this reason Amitāyus is called by the following names: Buddha of Infinite Light, Boundless Light, Unhindered Light ..." <sup>32</sup>

The Chinese halo/mandorla develops, in its most elaborate representations, patterns that are quite different from the halo patterns used in the Gandhāra, Indian or Central Asian examples, though some of these have the flame design and those at Rawak have spiral designs. The elaborate form of patterning as seen in the crest rim of the Group 6 Amitāyus and that is seen evolving in other examples of mandorlas, such as the 423 and 437 (Fig. 2.15) images from [Liu] Sung<sup>33</sup> as well as in later images under the Northern Wei, such as seen in the mandorlas of the 470s (Fig. 6.13a, b) and later, appears to be the Chinese solution for depicting the mysterious "lustre" of the Buddha's aura through patterns suggestive of motion. These patterns are similar to the motion of fire flames, which have the impression of generating appearance, transformation and disappearance. The Group 6 image, dated 424 (or 420), is an important example in painting of the early forms of this evolution of the Chinese style mandorla of the mystical aura, possibly reflecting developments from the Eastern Chin, as many features of this niche seem to do.

Overall, the composition of the back wall behind the Amitāyus Buddha is very different from the mandorla designs of the Group 22 Buddha (Fig. 5.45), although the design of the outer rim of the attendant Bodhisattva is very similar to the pattern of the outer rim of the Amitāyus' head halo (Fig. 5.53). The Group 22 Buddha's mandorla is a stunning design with strong red coloring and complex but bolder designs than employed in the mandorla of the Amitāyus. These factors indicate some continuity, but also again reveal the change in style in the Group 6 niche when compared with the earlier West and South Wall images. It is possible that the designs of the Group 6 mandorla reflect some new designs of a different "school" or from a different source than the Group 22 and earlier images in Cave 169. This source is likely to be the South (perhaps as transmitted through the Ch'eng-tu region of Szechwan), but it is still difficult to determine this point. The distinct color difference also

<sup>30</sup> *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, part III, *Chronicle of Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa) and Basket of Conduct (Caryāpiṭaka)*, trans. by I. B. Horner, London and Boston, 1975, p. 95.

<sup>31</sup> For example, in an excerpt from the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* on the Buddha's leaving his projection image in the Dragon Cave, there is an episode where "sixteen small dragons with hands holding a stone mountain crashing with thunder and discharging fire came to where the Buddha was. The people were alarmed and afraid and entered into the Buddha's light ..." Rhie (2002), p. 122.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted with Chinese characters in Chapter 6, section II.A.2.a.d.i).

<sup>33</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.82c, 2.89d.



highlights the expensive and high quality of the Amitāyus niche with its profuse usage of malachite green. This factor can probably be explained by the high rank of the donors of this niche, as will be discussed below.

*c. Attendant Bodhisattvas*

The two standing Bodhisattvas flanking the Amitāyus Buddha are each labeled on a colophon located at the juncture of their respective mandorla with that of the Amitāyus (Figs. 6.8a). The Bodhisattva on the Buddha's right is labeled as "□Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa" 觀世音菩薩 (Avalokiteśvara) and the Bodhisattva on the Buddha's left is labeled as "Te-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa" 得大勢至菩薩 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta). Both have graceful and slim, but rather small and childlike, forms. They do not stand completely to the full height of the seated Buddha and are thereby in deference to the main Buddha image. There is a subtlety in the modeling of the limbs and a sense of some relaxed ease in the stance compared with the more powerful, lofty and more abstractly patterned standing Bodhisattva of Group 17 (Fig. 4.26a), discussed above as dating ca. 385-400, and the more alert posture of the Group 22 standing Bodhisattva in Fig. 5.53, discussed earlier as dating ca. 410-415. There are many differences in details between the Group 17, Group 22 and Group 6 standing Bodhisattva images which seem to clearly mark stylistic changes from ca. 385-400, to ca. 410-415, to 424 (or 420) respectively.

In the Te-ta-shih-chih image (Fig. 6.15a, b), which does not wear a chest shawl like Kuan-shih-yin, the exposed upper torso shows an extended and sloping abdomen section similar to the representation in the Amitāyus figure. This appears to be a more advanced figural portrayal using the elongated upper torso and is different from the columnar lift of the smooth torso in the Group 17 Bodhisattva or the short-waisted appearance of the Group 22 standing Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.26a, 5.53). All have a straight-legged, frontal stance, but there is the hint of a sway in the bodies of the Group 6 Bodhisattvas. The dhoti covering the lower body is fairly plain with some delicate, slanting, incised fold lines and a straight-edged hem in the both of the Group 6 Bodhisattvas, different from the Group 17 and Group 22 Bodhisattva configurations; and this stresses the unity of the figure.

A wide chest shawl covers the left shoulder and stretches across much of the body of the Kuan-shih-yin (Figs. 6.14a, c). This chest shawl is simply depicted with a plain border and a few incised lines fanning out across the expanse of the body. Such shawls stretched across the chest appear in a number of Bodhisattva sculptures in Gandhāran art.<sup>34</sup> This mode appears in other Chinese images of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, especially as seen in some of the Bodhisattvas at Mai-chi shan (Figs. 9.16a, 9.18a). This feature is actually of some interest later in our discussion of the iconographic elements of the Group 6 images and the connections with Gandhāra.

The shoulder scarf in each Group 6 Bodhisattva image has few twists and presents itself mostly as a flat plane. It stands up vertically behind the shoulders and alongside the upper arms, winds around the arm at the elbow and curves outward with only one twist. Then it flares to the sides as a rather flat, slightly widening plane with a very delicately notched hem, which is different from the semicircular pinch pleat type hem seen in the scarves of the painted standing Bodhisattvas of the teaching Buddha panel in the thousand Buddhas of Group 24 (Figs. 5.8a, b). The scarves have strong, closely spaced, parallel lines similar in technique with those of the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva, the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva, and the Group 22 Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.26a, 4.40, 5.53). However, the shoulder scarf in both Group 6 Bodhisattvas is notably restrained in the loosely twisted and open, broadly

<sup>34</sup> For example, see Kurita (1990), II, figs. 14, 16, 18 and 35.



wavy hems which are a prominent part of the Group 22 Bodhisattva and the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva (Figs. 5.53, 4.40). The Group 17 Bodhisattva has an entirely different way of wearing the scarf—one which does not apparently continue. Neither of the Group 6 standing Bodhisattvas have the scarf around the waist with the ends falling beside the upper legs as in the Group 22 Bodhisattva (Fig. 5.53).

The head on each of the Group 6 Bodhisattvas is a little chubby and softly contoured (Figs. 6.14d, 6.15b). A mild smile adds a sense of delight to each image. The softness of these faces relates to the style of the Group 20 figures on the lower part of the South Wall (Fig. 5.66b). The hair is slightly puffy but with strong individual incised lines as seen in the other Bodhisattvas in this cave (Figs. 4.27, 5.53). Clearly there is a connection between certain techniques such as these that can perhaps be termed a Cave 169 “style”. A thick, twisted, beaded band, larger than that on the Group 22 Bodhisattva, encircles the head of each. The white ribbons are painted on the surface of the head halo, as are longer fringed ribbons that fall behind the shoulders and along the rim of the stand-up scarf (Fig. 6.14a, color Plate VI), apparently as part of a kerchief-like addition to the headdress. Long tresses hang behind the neck onto the back, but they are not as prominent as the curls of long hair seen on the Group 17 Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.26a). It is somewhat similar to the hair mode of the Group 22 Bodhisattva, except on that image the hair is spread out wider and is behind the scarf rather than in front of it as in the Group 6 Bodhisattvas (Fig. 5.53).

Each Bodhisattva also wears the tassel type earrings, first noted on the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.26a, b, 4.27), but these are more delicately portrayed in the Group 6 Bodhisattvas. The band necklace of these two Group 6 Bodhisattvas is rather narrow and has a point and interior square gem designs, unlike the plain semicircular necklace without a point of the Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva or the Group 22 Bodhisattva (Figs. 4.40, 4.53). The armbands have three narrow flat bands with the two outer ones in gold (the central band seems to be painted dark green). A round, gold projection from the top band suggests a small jewel shape (Fig. 6.14a and color Plate VI). The presence of gold indicates the expensive nature of this ensemble, which also uses lots of malachite, an expensive pigment. The shape of this ornament with three narrow, flat bands and projecting circular jewel seems similar to the armbands seen in the Kārttikeya image at the Udyāgiri caves in Central India datable to the early fifth century (Fig. 6.14e) and in the Kārttikeya statue from Vijābor in Kashmir of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>35</sup> possibly indicating a more or less universal usage of this kind in the India-to-China world of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Similar arm bands occur in the Asian Art Museum standing Bodhisattva of ca. 400 (Fig. 4.36) and in some of the early Bodhisattva sculptures at Mai-chi shan (Figs. 9.15a, 9.16a, b, 9.18a), which have quite a few features in common with the Bodhisattvas of Group 6, as will be discussed in Chapter 9 below. The bracelets of the Group 6 Bodhisattvas are portrayed in the same manner as the arm bands. The Kuan-shih-yin appears to have had a long triple stranded flat chain of the same gold and green strands as seen in the armbands and bracelets making a V-shape hanging low on the chest (Fig. 6.14c, color Pl. VI). Interestingly, neither Bodhisattva has an image of the Buddha Amitābha/Amitāyus in the crown, a feature usually present in later representations of Kuan-shih-yin, at least by the 450’s-460’s. This is an interesting point which will be noted in discussion of the texts below. Kuan-shih-yin holds a small lotus bud (or jewel) in the raised left hand and Te-ta-shih-chih holds one against the chest with the right hand. These are similar to the small lotus buds (or jewels) held by the Asian Art Museum Kuan-yin image (Fig. 4.36). The pedestals of each Group 6 Bodhisattva

<sup>35</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 5.9d.

are semi-circular lotus pedestals with a quite low, flat central pod (Figs. 6.8a, 6.15a). The downward turned lotus petals are flat and smooth. Similar kinds of lotus depictions occur on pedestals of the images of Gandhāra and Haḍḍa, discussed in Chapter 8. The mandorlas of each Bodhisattva have a circular head halo with plain bands of color (mostly lost on the Kuan-shih-yin). In the encompassing mandorla, which contains both the head and body haloes, the innermost zone has a large, white flame pattern outlined in black and gray (Fig. 6.14a, color Pl. VI). It is followed by a relatively wide, plain red band that is in turn followed by a band of continuous wavy flame patterns in malachite green against a black ground. A narrow rim of white pearls separates the wavy green flame zone from the outermost rim of more intricate, black and white flame patterns (Fig. 6.14c), which are similar to the patterns in the outermost rim of the mandorla of the standing Bodhisattva of Group 22 (Fig. 5.53). Much original red, green and white paint remains on the two attendant Bodhisattvas.

Because the Group 6 niche is dated to 424 (or 420), rather than needing to be dated on stylistic and contextual grounds, this group of sculptures and paintings in and of itself becomes an valuable resource in dating other, undated works of the time and certainly becomes a stable indicator in the chronological assessment of the Cave 169 images and many others as well. However, one can consider the possible connections and sources of the sculptures and paintings of Group 6 in order to try to determine not only the regional characteristic by comparative analysis, but to understand whence the various artistic movements of styles and motifs emanate and in turn exert possible influence. In the discussion of various aspects of Group 6 in the conclusion of the Group 6 niche in Chapter 7, some indications appear that may suggest some influences from the South, that is from the late Eastern Chin or early [Liu] Sung.

## 2. Textual Considerations

A number of texts specifically devoted to Amitābha/Amitāyus, and that mention Amitābha/Amitāyus, had been translated into Chinese by ca. 425. In fact, all the major canonical texts (sutras rather than commentaries) on this Buddha and Sukhāvātī (the Buddhakṣetra, Buddha-land, Buddha-field, Buddha-realm, Buddha-country, etc., of this Buddha in the western direction) which we know about had been translated into Chinese, with, however, some controversy regarding the date of translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經, and the possible exception of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* 觀無量壽佛經, the visualization sutra, which is considered to have been translated by Kālayāsa between 424-442 the [Liu] Sung. At this juncture we will be looking at these texts primarily from the standpoint of the time and region of the Chinese translations, and not addressing specific doctrinal issues or issues concerning the problems of time and place of origin in the Indian and/or Central Asian worlds.

Specifically, the pertinent texts are examined here with regard to certain names and terms and how they change over time up to ca. 425 with a view to understanding the specific position and relevance of the texts with regard to the images of the Group 6 niche, which are datable to 424 (or 420) and are major icons that retain important, original colophons with specific names. The initial level of investigation is to look at the usage of the terminology for the names of these icons as they appear in the various pertinent translated texts prior to 425. That is, what Chinese characters are used by what translators and how does the translation terminology evolve over time in different translations. The purpose in doing this is to see if any insights can be derived regarding the most probable textual basis for the Group 6 niche and how the Group 6 images and data could contribute to a wider range of issues regarding the development of Buddhism in China, the translation of Buddhist texts in China, and the

understanding of the relation of texts, translations, regional interests, movements of monks, etc. and how they may interact with the production of Buddhist art, such as the Group 6 niche, around the date of 424 (or 420), which, as we shall see, actually becomes of significant consequence. For convenience in comparing texts and terms, a running summary is presented in the table of Appendix II for all the texts examined in this section.

In examining the following texts, in general we will be focusing on the names of the three main sculptures of the niche and also include the name of Sukhāvati, the land of Amitābha/Amitāyus, as it is also helpful in commenting on the chronological comparisons and evolution of the translated terms. However, because we will also be commenting on other terminology and concepts, such as the ten-direction Buddhas, the Buddhas of the Three Ages, and others, passages regarding these terms will also be noted here for usage elsewhere in this book. Because there is a considerable number of texts to be considered, they are approached in three major groupings. The first group includes texts from the earliest works of the Later Han translated by Lokakṣema, followed by those of the Three Kingdoms and Western Chin period, mainly those translated by Chih-ch'ien and Dharmarakṣa. Then, in the second group, which moves into the Eastern Chin period, a period that did not produce major translations related to this theme, we look at the images, eulogies and biographies of that time. These come mainly from the South and concern such luminaries as Chih-tun and Hui-yüan. The final section looks at translations by Kumārajīva, Buddhahadra, T'an-wu-chieh and Kālayaśas from ca. 400-425. In the case of multiple translations (like the *Lotus Sutra*), the various translations (recensions) of a particular text are examined together at first citation (i.e., both Dharmarakṣa's and Kumārajīva's translations of the *Lotus Sutra* are looked at in tandem in order to be able to see the comparative differences and similarities). The concluding remarks and the table of Appendix II including the terms will address the chronological sequence of each discrete text in order to sum up and clarify the evolution of the terminology.

a. *Early texts: Later Han, Three Kingdoms and Western Chin Period (texts translated by Lokakṣema (Chih Lou-chia-ch'an 支婁迦讖), Chih-ch'ien 支謙, Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu 竺法護) and their recensions translated prior to ca. 425)*

Several of the sutras translated by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 (Chih Lou-chia-ch'an; also called Chih-ch'an 支讖), who was working in Loyang sometime after 165 A.D. in the Later Han, are the earliest known translations into Chinese of texts that mention the Buddha Amitābha/Amitāyus.<sup>36</sup> The most certain in terms of the translator, time and location of translation is the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*. There are also two early versions of the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvāivīyūha Sūtra*, though there is much debate concerning the translator of each. These are important as the early group of texts regarding Amitābha/Amitāyus prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but the situation is quite complicated, not least by the third remaining translation of the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvāivīyūha*, that is, the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. Other texts, such as the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍrika* (*Lotus Sutra*), offer relevant data, even though they are not the fundamental texts focused on Buddha Amitābha/Amitāyus. With a view towards understanding the development of Amitābha/Amitāyus in China and thus to more knowledgeably assess the Group 6 niche, a brief review of the pertinent texts is presented below.

<sup>36</sup> See P. Harrison, "The Earliest Chinese Translation of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema," *Buddhist Studies Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1993), pp. 141-177.

- 1) *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (*Po-chou san-mei ching* 般舟三昧經, *Samādhi* of the Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present), 3 chüan, translated by Lokakṣema (Chih Lou-chia-ch'an 支婁迦讖, sometimes referred to as Chih-ch'an 支讖), put out in Later Han 179 A.D., 10th month, in Loyang. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), pp. 902c-919c; Korean catalogue (K 67). It was revised in 208 at Hsü-ch'ang 許昌, then the capital (near Loyang, which was in ruins at the time).<sup>37</sup> Like the *Tao hsing Po-jo ching*, which came out on the same day in 179 A.D., it is securely attributed to Lokakṣema by Tao-an (312-385) in his catalogue *Tsung-li chung-ching mu-lu* 綜理衆經目錄, commonly known as the *Tao-an lu* 道安錄 or *An-lu* 安錄 (ca. 374).<sup>38</sup>

There are four Chinese translations of this text (*Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 416, 417, 418, 419)).<sup>39</sup> The Sanskrit is lost (except one fragment found at Khadalik), but a Tibetan version, presumably translated from the Sanskrit, does exist.<sup>40</sup> Paul Harrison, who has studied and translated this sutra, notes: "Although we have here the earliest datable literary reference to Amitāyus and his *buddhakṣetra* Sukhāvatī, it is quite clear from other passages in the sūtra...that he [Amitābha] is employed only as an example, and that the object of the samādhi can be any Buddha or number of Buddhas, in whatever direction their *buddhakṣetras* may lie. It is nonetheless interesting to speculate on the reason why Amitāyus was in fact chosen as the example, since he is the only present Buddha to be named in the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*. One can only suppose that by the time this work was composed there was already a well-developed and widespread cult of Amitābha, to whom followers the author (or authors) of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* hoped to appeal ..." Harrison further notes that this sutra served as a basis for visualization, a function that sutras such as the *Sukhavāṭivyuha* served to a degree and which the *Kuan Wu liang shou fo ching* even more pointedly served.<sup>41</sup>

In this sutra, Amitāyus is presented as teaching the Dharma directly to the visualizing person, who would immediately learn it and then teach it to others, realizing, however, that this flowed from his/her own mind. Harrison makes the important observation that this sutra combines the teachings of the Wisdom sutras on emptiness with the visualization of the Buddhas and their Buddha fields. That is, it is a text that combines aspects of the early Mahāyāna wisdom texts regarding śūnya with early Mahāyāna aspects of samādhi visualization, much of which is related to the emerging role of the Buddha-lands (fo-tsa 佛刹 Buddha fields—only later translated as "pure lands") at this same time. In the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, the Buddhas of the ten-directions are cited many times. Amitābha is specifically singled out in an important "case", presented in Chapter 2 (Practice), but the glorious aspects of his Buddha field are not presented, nor are they an issue. The issue is the teaching of

<sup>37</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), pp. 106-107; Harrison (1993), p. 146.

<sup>38</sup> *Ch'u san-tsang chi chi*, chüan 2, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 6b; Harrison (1978), p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> Other than T 418, the primary one considered here, the others are: T 419: *Pa-p'o p'u-sa ching* (*Bhadrपाला-bodhisattva-sutra*), 1 chüan. Anon. Probably Late Han or soon after. Only first 6 chapters. T 417: *Po-chou san-mei ching*, 1 chüan, attributed to Lokakṣema. Harrison thinks "undoubtedly an anonymous abridgement of T 418 as seen in the Sung, Yüan and Ming Tripiṭaka). Harrison (1978), p. 41. T 416: *Ta-fang-teng ta chi ching hsien hu fen*, translated in 594-595 by Jñānagupta, et al.

<sup>40</sup> This was used by Paul Harrison in conjunction with the Chinese text (T 418) in his translation and study of this sutra. P. Harrison, "Buddhānumśrī in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 6, (1978), p. 40. For the translation and detailed study, see P. Harrison, *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present*, Tokyo, 1990. He has a more recent translation specifically of the Chinese translation (T 418) text: P. Harrison, *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 25-II, Berkeley, CA, 1998, which will be the one primarily referred to here.

<sup>41</sup> Harrison (1978), pp. 43-44.

the Dharma directly from the Buddha Amitābha (a Buddha accessible in the present—an important early Mahāyāna theme in contradistinction to the Hinayāna interpretation that only Śākyamuni is the Buddha of the present) to the visualizing recipient, who then acquires this Dharma and is able to teach it as he/she has heard in the direct encounter with the Buddha Amitābha, or, by implication, any other Buddha of the ten-directions. Thus, the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* interestingly presents an early, clear, major step available in China by 179 A.D. of combining the cultivation of samādhi with the visualization of the Buddha-fields (also translated as Buddha-lands). This probably reflects, to a degree at least, what is happening in India, Gandhāra and possibly also parts of Central Asia, a theme which is currently under intense scrutiny by various scholars in their search to fathom “early Mahāyāna” and which will continue to engage this study and those to follow in this series as it relates to China—a prime player in this great historical and Buddhist development.

This text, translated and put out by Lokakṣema in 179 A.D. in the Later Han, apparently became an important text in China, especially considering that it was a major text studied by Hui-yüan and his disciples.<sup>42</sup> Tsukamoto comments on the text as follows: “Pratyutpanna means ‘standing directly in front’ or, to be more specific, it refers to a state of concentration in which all Buddhas at present in the ten quarters stand in front of one. As a concrete method of realizing this state of concentration, the scripture in question preaches that one should, in particular, concentrate one’s mind, for a period ranging from one day and night to seven days and nights, on the Buddha Amita in the west, thereby seeing Him and hearing Him preach the dharma. Then this practical prescription became a guide for the earliest Amita cult in the history of Chinese Buddhism, and became the principal scriptural authority for the salvationist fellowship, including both monks and laymen, organized at the Monastery of the Eastern Forest (Tung-lin ssu) on Mount Lu by Hui-yüan under the Eastern Tsin.”<sup>43</sup>

Here we will take specific note of several features of this text, because of its apparent importance in the development of the phenomena of visualization in China from the Late Han and which clearly reached a high point in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century, as we can witness in the Buddhist art of China, particularly in the Kansu area and most especially at Ping-ling ssu and Mai-chi shan. It also forms an early, foundational part of the evolution of the visualization related to the Buddha fields which we see being presented in the Chinese translated materials from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and especially in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, particularly around the 420’s. These developments inform the understanding of the Cave 169 imagery at Ping-ling ssu.

Looking more closely at the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, a number of characteristics and certain points can be brought out because of their pertinence in understanding the art of Ping-ling ssu Cave 169. This by no means is a study of the entire sutra, but it is extracting, for the sake of application to the iconography and art, those features which have a bearing on understanding the specifics of image iconography that may be based on texts, as well as on sensing the main issues that underlie the making of Buddhist art in this early phase in China.

The purpose of the text is to present a meditation (samādhi) in which the practitioner visualizes the Buddhas of the ten-directions: Buddhas of the Present, all “standing before one.” It begins by the Bud-

<sup>42</sup> One of the questions asked by Hui-yüan in his correspondence with Kumārajīva included one on the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*: “When practicing the ‘remembrance of the Buddha’... the vision of the Buddha is often associated with dreams, e.g., in the *Banzhou sanmei jing*. Are these then not just a product of our mind? On the other hand, if the vision comes from without as a response to our wishes, does it not result from the supernatural powers (*abhijñā*) of the devotee?” Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, third edition, Leiden, 2007, p. 228.

<sup>43</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p. 107.



dha (Śākyamuni) answering a question on the best way to attain wisdom. The question is put by the Bodhisattva Bhadrāpala, who is a layman of Rajgir, and who, as learned in *chüan* 2, will be chief among the eight great Bodhisattvas who will uphold, protect, and preach this sutra in ages to come. In Chapter 2, the specifics of this meditation are introduced: first by concentrating one's thoughts towards the Buddhas of the ten-directions: "Any bodhisattvas whose thoughts are at present concentrated and directed towards the Buddhas of the ten quarters (十方), will, if they possess mental concentration, achieve all the exalted practices of a bodhisattva." Then, "by calling to mind the presence of the Buddha Amitābha in the western quarter 心念西方阿彌陀佛常念阿彌陀佛,"<sup>44</sup> a thousand million myriad Buddha-fields (fo-sha 佛刹) away from here, in his land called Sukhāvātī (Hsü-ma-t'i 須摩提),<sup>45</sup> in the midst of a host of bodhisattvas, preaching the sutras ... Let them [the bodhisattvas] all constantly call to mind the Buddha Amitābha ...<sup>46</sup> The practitioner (bodhisattvas) should "call him to mind single-mindedly, either for one day and one night, or for seven days and seven nights. After seven days they will see the Buddha Amitābha. If they do not see him in a waking state, then they will see him in a dream ..."<sup>47</sup> They do not see him with the divine eye or go there by supernormal powers, "... rather, while sitting here they see the Buddha Amitābha, hear the sutras which he preaches, and receive them all. Rising from meditation they are able to preach them to others in full."<sup>48</sup> These practitioners (bodhisattvas) can succeed to be born in Amitābha's realm by always calling him to mind without letting up: "... Bhadrāpala, bodhisattvas hear about the Buddha Amitābha and call him to mind again and again in this land. Because of this calling to mind, they see the Buddha Amitābha. Having seen him they ask him what dharma it takes to be born in the realm of the Buddha Amitābha. Then the Buddha Amitābha says to these bodhisattvas: 'If you wish to come and be born in my realm, you must always call me to mind again and again, you must always keep this thought in mind without letting up, and thus you will succeed in coming to be born in my realm 當得來生我國 ...'"<sup>49</sup>

It is made clear that this kind of visualization does not disagree with the wisdom texts where śūnya (emptiness) of all dharmas is taught: "... Because of calling the Buddha to mind, one obtains the meditation of emptiness. Such is the calling to mind of the Buddha ... [it is] "the concentration of emptiness ..."<sup>50</sup> When they [the bodhisattvas] reflect on the Buddha they ought not to reflect on [him as] an existing thing, nor should they have [the notion: 'It is something'] set up by me. As they would conceive of emptiness so should they reflect on the Buddha standing there like a precious gem placed on beryl 如持珍寶著琉璃上. In this way bodhisattvas will have a clear vision of the innumerable Buddhas of the ten quarters ..."<sup>51</sup> Those who possess the numinous power of the Buddha and who are established in the meditation have three things: they possess the numinous power of the Buddha, they possess the power of the Buddha's meditation, and they possess the power of their former merit. Because of these three things they succeed in seeing the Buddha ... Whatever I think, that I see. The

<sup>44</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), p. 905a.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 905a.

<sup>46</sup> English translation from Harrison (1998), pp. 15-17. Chinese characters from the *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, (T 418), p. 905a.

<sup>47</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 18; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 905a.

<sup>48</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 18; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 905a.

<sup>49</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 19; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 905b.

<sup>50</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 19; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 905b.

<sup>51</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 20; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 905c.



mind does not itself know the mind, the mind does not itself see mind. A mind with conceptions is stupidity, a mind without conceptions is nirvana.”<sup>52</sup>

In Chapter 3, focus turns away from Amitābha specifically and speaks in general terms concerning the ten-direction Buddhas and the Buddhas of the Past, Future and Present:

... “If bodhisattvas possess a further four things, they quickly master this meditation. What are the four? First, they make an image of the Buddha (tso fo hsing hsiang 作佛形像) or they make a picture 若作畫, for the sake of this meditation 用是三昧故 ...<sup>53</sup> Commit yourself in advance to all the Buddhas of the Past (Kuo chü fo 過去佛) and the Buddhas of the Future (Tang-lai fo 當來佛). Always think of and make offerings to the Buddhas of the Present (Hsien-tsai fo 現在佛), who are all the most exalted of men ... you should make images of the Buddha 當作佛像, perfect in various ways and beautiful in various ways, with countenances as radiant as gold ...”<sup>54</sup>

Practitioners (bodhisattvas) should regard teachers as Buddhas. They will see Buddhas in all the ten-directions like stars and when they awaken from meditation they will see innumerable Buddhas:

“... just as the bodhisattvas in the Buddha-land (fo-tsa 佛刹) of Amitābha always see innumerable Buddhas, so too the bodhisattvas who master the meditation always see innumerable Buddhas.”<sup>55</sup> The ten directions are also described as having “Buddha lands in the four quarters, the four intermediate points, the zenith and nadir.”<sup>56</sup>

In Chapter VII (The Prediction) of chüan 2, Bhadrakalpa and others entrust themselves to preserve and personally keep this meditation in the age of disorder: “... They preserved this Dharma which moves in three turns 三轉...<sup>57</sup> The eight bodhisattvas will once more encounter Buddha Maitreya 觀彌勒時... Under those Buddhas who arise in this Bhadrakalpa 義若此於是賢劫所興佛 ... and will serve Buddhas of the past, future and present 去來現在佛 ... seeing the Lords of the Three Ages 見三世尊 ...”<sup>58</sup>

Later, in Chapter 9 of chüan 2, Śākyamuni announces that: “I heard this meditation from Buddha Dīpaṃkara in his presence and immediately took it up. I saw the innumerable Buddhas of the ten quarters, heard the sutras from all of them and retained them all.”<sup>59</sup> During the final sequences of the sutra in chüan 3, there are many more references to the Buddhas of the Past, Present, and Future and to the Buddhas of the ten-directions.

The above quotes are some examples which show the usage in this sutra of certain ideas, terms, names that indicate the focus, interests and concerns of a segment of early Mahāyāna Buddhist texts which made their way into Chinese translation and became part of the world of early Buddhism in China. Certain features and terms remain of particular interest here because of their relevance to the study of Chinese Buddhist images. For example, we are paying particular attention to the following elements which occur in this sutra: the ten-direction Buddhas, the Buddhas of the Past, Future and Present (Lords of the Three Times 三世尊), the knowledge of Amitābha (A-mi-t’o fo 阿彌陀佛) and his Sukhāvātī (Hsü-ma-t’i 須摩提) Buddha-field (fo tsa 佛刹) in the western quarter (西方), the idea

<sup>52</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 21; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 905c.

<sup>53</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 23; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 906a.

<sup>54</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 24; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 906b.

<sup>55</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 26; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, pp. 906c-907a.

<sup>56</sup> Harrison (1998), p. 32; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 908a (in the verses).

<sup>57</sup> Harrison (1998), pp. 49-52; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 911a-b.

<sup>58</sup> Harrison (1998), pp. 54-55; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 911c.

<sup>59</sup> Harrison (1998), pp. 76-77; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 13, p. 915c.

of encountering Maitreya one more time, Śākyamuni Buddha's connection with Dīpaṃkara in receiving the samādhi outlined in this sutra, the usage of making images and paintings of the Buddhas, and most of all, the idea of the direct encounter with the Buddhas of the ten-directions (Amitābha among them and used as the prime example) from whom the practitioner (called a Bodhisattva in the context of this text) hears the Dharma and is then able to teach it to others in full. This text expounds the practical means of hearing the teaching directly from a Buddha in the present and in that way learning the wisdom of the Bodhisattva path. These are all Mahāyāna goals being articulated in their relatively early form, but related to the actual experience in visualization of encountering and hearing the Buddhas directly. The cosmic scope of the Buddha fields is also fully apparent and a feature that continues unabated in the Mahāyāna texts, though the intensity, detail, and vocabulary continues to change and evolve.

This sutra is known to have had enormous influence on Hui-yüan and his disciples at Lu shan in the late 4<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Hui-yüan even questioned Kumārajīva in one of the letters to him concerning the issue of the “reality” of the direct visualization (see note 42 above). However, with regard specifically to the Group 6 niche in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, there does not appear to be any direct relation. The *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* does not include reference to the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvati, which are a major feature of the Group 6 niche and which clearly represent a different textual basis.

## 2) [Larger] *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*

There are three extant early translations of the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* (known as the “Larger”) into Chinese (T 360, 361 and 362) and one surviving translation of the text known as the “Smaller” (T 366).<sup>60</sup> The three surviving early versions of the (Larger) *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* are discussed here as items (2a, b and c) and the “Smaller” is discussed later as a translation by Kumārajīva, the only translation now extant, though many think that the (Smaller) *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* may originally have been one of the earliest concerning the Sukhāvati Buddha-land and the Amitābha/Amitāyus theme (see No. 12 in Appendix II).<sup>61</sup>

Each of the three translations of the “Larger” is fraught with problems, which will be briefly indicated and commented on with each individual text. The situation regarding these translations is complicated and even confusing with different Chinese sutra records often citing contradicting information, particularly with regard to the attribution of the translators. The oldest surviving records regarding the Chinese translations of the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* appear in the *Ch'u san-tsang chi chi* 出三藏記集 (compiled by 518 A.D. by Seng-yu 僧祐), usually considered the most reliable of the Chinese sutra record books and which incorporates the *Tao-an-lu* 道安錄 (ca. 374), which is otherwise lost. One of the citations (others are discussed later) in the CTSCC, chüan 2, is written in the column headed by the text name *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經 as follows:

The *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經: Chih-ch'ien 支謙 put out the *A-mi-t'o ching* 阿彌陀經 in 2 chüan; Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 (Dharmarakṣa) put out the *Wu-liang-shou* 無量壽 in 2 chüan, also called [or also said to be] 或云 the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh* 無量清淨平等覺; Kumārajīva (Chiu-mo-lo-shih 鳩摩羅什)

<sup>60</sup> For a listing, brief comment and synopsis of the main early “pure land” texts from China, including the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha*, both extant and non-extant, see Mark Blum, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism, A study and Translation of Gyōnen's Jōdo Hōmon Genrūshō*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 147-152.

<sup>61</sup> Soper (1959), p. 150.

put out the *Wu-liang-shou* 無量壽 in one chüan; Shih Pao-yün 釋寶雲 put out the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou* (New *Wu-liang-shou* [ching]) 新無量壽 in 2 chüan; Chiu-na-po-t'o-lo 求那跋陀羅 (Guṇabhadra) put out the *Wu-liang-shou* 無量壽 in one chüan. [With regard to this sutra], five persons separately put it out.<sup>62</sup>

This passage indicates the complicated situation regarding the Chinese translations of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* (both the Larger and the Smaller) by ca. 518 A.D., but the situation becomes even more tangled and difficult when one considers the later records. Consequently, there is not unanimity among scholars concerning the translations of the surviving early texts, despite many studies, particularly by Japanese scholars during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Here we will present an outline of the data and opinions with the purpose of achieving a view concerning the relation of this text to the images of Group 6 in Cave 169, and to gain some understanding of the developments concerning Amitābha/Amitāyus in early Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist art. Here we will be speaking only of the Chinese translations and not considering the Sanskrit texts or the Tibetan translations.

a) *A-mi-t'o san-yeh san fo sa lou fo t'an kuo tu jen tao ching* 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經, 2 chüan, translation attributed in the *Daizōkyō* and the Korean catalogue to Chih-ch'ien 支謙 between 223-253 in Wu-ch'ang.<sup>63</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 362), pp. 300a-317c. Korean Catalogue (K 25).

This sutra is usually shortened as the *A-mi-t'o ching* 阿彌陀經, but has come to be called the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* 大阿彌陀經 since the T'ang dynasty.<sup>64</sup> Despite the fact that this sutra is attributed to Chih-ch'ien as the translator in the *CSTCC* (see quote above at opening of this section) and is followed by most Chinese and other sutra record books thereafter, including in the current *Daizōkyō*, there is some doubt in the scholarly world concerning Chih-ch'ien as the translator, primarily on grounds of the vocabulary and translation style, which does not agree in many instances with that known from other translations by Chih-ch'ien.<sup>65</sup> Another theory suggests that this sutra was translated by Lokakṣema in the late Later Han period. The basis for the Lokakṣema translation attribution theory rests primarily on the vocabulary and style of writing used in the sutra, which has considerable agreement with the vocabulary and terminology used in other sutras known to have been translated by Lokakṣema.<sup>66</sup> Though this controversy has not been definitively resolved, there seems at least to be general agreement among scholars that the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* is an earlier translation than the *Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching* 無量清淨平等覺經 (T 361; often abbreviated to *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* 平等覺經, see 2b below and in Appendix II) and therefore the earliest of the three extant early (Larger) *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra* translations into Chinese.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *CSTCC*, chüan 2, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 14a.

<sup>63</sup> Present E-cheng, Hupei, near Wu-han on the Yangtzu, capital of the Wu kingdom from 221-229 A.D.

<sup>64</sup> This sutra has various names, the long title cited first comes from the *CSTCC*. The *A-mi-t'o ching* appears in the Korean Koguryō tripiṭaka and is also used in the Sung, Yüan and Ming tripiṭakas. Apparently to avoid confusion with the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* translated by Kumārajīva, the title *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* was used at least from the T'ang dynasty (in the *K'ai-yüan lu*). Fujita, Kōtatsu, *Genshi Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū* (Early Pure Land Thought), Tokyo, 1970, p. 51.

<sup>65</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 51-55.

<sup>66</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 55-59.

<sup>67</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 52-55 for discussion of Chih-ch'ien as translator, and *Ibid.*, pp. 55-59 for the theory of Lokakṣema as translator; conclusions, *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61. He offers a table of vocabulary words that shows that Chih-ch'ien tended to use names based on translation of the meaning whereas Lokakṣema mainly used phonetic translation words. Further, Chih-ch'ien often used shorter or more concise phrases compared with the writing style of Lokakṣema. However, there are also examples where Chih-ch'ien uses the same terms as Lokakṣema, so there is not a complete difference in terminology. There is apparently no record in the Chinese sutra records that Lokakṣema translated this

The *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* (T 362) lists the vows of Dharmakara as being 24 and contains a section on the “five evils and five goods” (considered a Chinese interpolation as it does not exist in the Sanskrit version), as does the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* 平等覺經 (T 361). “It is presumably a forerunner of the Scripture of the One of Immeasurable Life (*Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經), which has 48 vows.”<sup>68</sup> In the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* the Buddha is called A-mi-t'o fo 阿彌陀佛 and his land is called A-mi-t'o fo kuo 阿彌陀佛國. The name Hsü-ma-t'i 須摩提 for Sukhāvati used in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* translated by Lokakṣema in 179 A.D. is not used in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, but both use the name of the Buddha as “A-mi-t'o”. Further, both the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching* (T 362) and the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361), name the two great Bodhisattvas of his Buddha-land as Ho<sup>69</sup>-lou-hsüan 蓋樓亘 (a phoneticization for “Avalokasvara,” the earlier Indian form of Avalokiteśvara) and Ma-ho-na-po 摩訶那鉢 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta).<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, both sutras provide more (and virtually the same) description of these two great Bodhisattvas than the later and more popular *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經 (T 360; see below 2.c and Appendix II). The following is a translation of the passage describing these two Bodhisattvas in the *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, which appears near the end of the first chüan:

... Among the various Bodhisattvas there are two most honorable Bodhisattvas. [They are] always sitting at the left and right side of the Buddha, attending to the correct expounding (cheng lun). The Buddha is always sitting together with these two Bodhisattvas facing (opposite) discussing the matters of the past, future and present in the eight directions, zenith and nadir. If [Buddha A-mi-t'o] wishes to send these two Bodhisattvas, they can reach the countless various Buddha places (fo so 佛所) in the eight directions, zenith and nadir, and they fly and go. If they think of going and want to reach [these places], they can fly and go fast like Buddhas. They are courageous without compare. One Bodhisattva's name is Ho-lou-hsüan 蓋樓亘 and the other Bodhisattva's name is Ma-ho-na-po 摩訶那鉢. [They are] first in brilliant wisdom. On the head of each the brilliant light flames shine always, greatly shining in other directions [to] one thousand Sumeru mountain Buddha countries. The head halos of various Bodhisattvas shine 1,000 million 10,000 *li*. The halos of the various Arhats (A-lo-han 阿羅漢) brightly shine; each shine for seven chang (7 yards). Buddha said, “People in the world who are good men and good women, and those who are frightened by government officials, by merely oneself trusting in Ho-lou-hsüan and Ma-ho-na-po Bodhisattvas, there is no one who cannot escape ...”<sup>71</sup>

A little further towards the end of the same chüan, there is another passage concerning these two Bodhisattvas, which discusses their role as successors to Amitābha:

... Buddha said, “A-mi-t'o fo has a long life that is extremely long, powerfully spiritual, honorable great, with brilliant wisdom, imposing and splendidly excellent. Only He is like this.” Buddha said, “After

sutra. However, this could be because of the early attribution by Tao-an to Chih-ch'ien, which was simply followed thereafter in later record books.

From his work on Lokakṣema, Paul Harrison suggests that this sutra (T 362) is the version translated by Lokakṣema rather than the version translated by Chih-ch'ien, to whom it has traditionally been attributed. Harrison further suggests that Chih-ch'ien is likely the translator of T 361 (*P'ing-teng-chüeh ching*) [see below], which has been traditionally attributed to Lokakṣema, thus suggesting that the translators of T 361 (*P'ing-teng-chüeh ching*) and T 362 (*A-mi-t'o ching*) somehow got switched during the cataloguing processes.

<sup>68</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), pp. 145, 149.

<sup>69</sup> This character is referred to another character in the footnote 5, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 308. That other character 广/盍 (which is not accessible in my character reservoir being used for this book) has the same pronunciation as ho 合 (“ho” for “va” in Avalokasvara?) according to S. Mochizuki, *Bukkyō Daijiten*, Tokyo, 1931-1937, Vol. 4, p. 596c-597a.

<sup>70</sup> I am grateful to Paul Harrison for first informing me about the characters for these two Bodhisattvas in these two early translations. Also see Jan Nattier, “The Names of Amitābha/Amitāyus in early Chinese Buddhist Translations (2),” *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University [ARIRIAB]* for the Year 2006, Vol. X, (March 2007), p. 388.

<sup>71</sup> *A-mi-t'o ching*, chüan shang 上, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 362), p. 308b.

A-mi-t'ō fo reaches Parinirvāṇa, thereupon Ho-lou-hsüan 蓋樓亘 Bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara) will become the Buddha, completely controlled, with enlightened wisdom, a profound master teaching in the world and in the eight directions, zenith and nadir, saving various heavenly beings, worldly people, [including] the flitting and wriggling species; all are destined to obtain the path (tao) of Buddha's Nirvāṇa (liberation). His [Ho-lou-hsüan's] excellent blessing and virtue will again, like the great master A-mi-t'ō fo, remain for countless kalpas, and again for countless innumerable kalpas, authorizing the Dharma, great master, then comes to his Parinirvāṇa. Next, Ma-ho-na-po 摩訶那鉢 Bodhisattva (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) will become the Buddha, a profound master of wisdom, completely controlled, teaching and saving, blessed and virtuous, will again, like the great master A-mi-t'ō fo remain countless kalpas, redoubled, and then [attain] Parinirvāṇa. Turning, developing, receiving, and the passage to enlightenment is extremely clear. The country-land [kuo-t'u, i.e., the Buddhda-land of A-mi-t'ō] is extremely excellent. Its Dharma is like this. Thusly no cessation, no limit ...<sup>72</sup>

This latter passage is interesting and unusual in that it discusses the succession of Buddhas in Sukhāvātī. A comparable passage also appears in the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361), but, as far as I know, does not appear in other extant versions of the *Sukhāvātivyūha*, nor is this idea repeated in such major sutras as the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Kuan ching*, though it is alluded to in some other later texts.<sup>73</sup> It seems to be a concept that was introduced in the earliest Amitābha-Sukhāvātī centered sutras, but is more or less dropped from most literature thereafter. It is also interesting to note the considerable importance afforded to Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the two early texts. This may account, at least to some degree, to the growing and continuous popularity of these two Bodhisattvas. It certainly sets up the idea of the Buddha with two major Bodhisattvas, both of whom will succeed him in Sukhāvātī. This concept forms a clear triad relationship with specifically named Buddha and two specifically named great Bodhisattvas. One can readily relate to the textual descriptions, which are also eminently transferrable to imagery, such as to sculptures and paintings. The inspirational power of a triad that is derived from textual content and remains a constant and consistent part of the focus on the Buddha land of Sukhāvātī, becomes a powerful idiom in Buddhist art and practice in China and later even in all of East Asia. It is not an amorphous or ambiguous triad as is often the case with other Buddhas and their accompanying Bodhisattvas, where it is frequently difficult to identify who the two attendant Bodhisattvas are in name, even if we think we may know who the Buddha may be. This is the case for Chinese, Central Asian, Gandhāran, and Indian Buddhist art.

In spite of the importance for clearly articulating and establishing the “triad” of Sukhāvātī, the main factor concerning the *Ta A-mi-t'ō ching* for our specific purposes is that the Chinese characters for the names of the two great Bodhisattvas are different from the characters used in the Group 6 colophons. This strongly indicates that neither this translation of the sutra (T 362), nor the following one (T 361), both of which use the same terminology for the names of these two Bodhisattvas, served as the basis for the Group 6 triad. Further, though both texts agree on many points, they use a different name for the Buddha in each, and also different with respect to the Group 6 colophon.

b) *Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching* 無量清淨平等覺經, 4 chüan, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 361), pp. 279b-299c. Korean Catalogue K24. This text is commonly referred to as the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* 平等覺經. In the *Daizōkyō* this version of the *Sukhāvātivyūha Sūtra* is said to have been translated by Lokakṣema in Later Han, but most scholars are of the opinion that it was not translated

<sup>72</sup> *Ta A-mi-t'ō ching*, chüan shang 上, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 362), p. 309a.

<sup>73</sup> Such as the *Kuan-shih-yin Shou-chi ching*, (T 371), translated into Chinese by T'an-wu-chieh in ca. 420. This text is discussed below in section II.A.2.c.16).ii (also see Appendix II, no. 16).



by Lokakṣema. For example, Tsukamoto notes that it is “regarded as not being a work of Lokakṣema, but of Po Yen 白延 (ca. 258 A.D.), or of Dharmarakṣa, and according to those who hold the latter, the *A-mi-t’o ching* 阿彌陀經 (T 362) is the oldest extant version.”<sup>74</sup>

Fujita Kōtatsu in his 1970 study lays out the opinions and issues of this complicated case, both with regard to the Chinese records and regarding the comparative vocabulary.<sup>75</sup> He shows that there is considerable difference in the translation vocabulary between this sutra and those known to have been translated by Lokakṣema.<sup>76</sup> When suggesting who did translate this sutra, Fujita favors the theory of Po-yen (or Pai-yen) in the Ts’ao Wei period (ca. mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century), or, as second choice, Po-yen of Later Liang in Kansu (ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century). There is some confusion in the records regarding both of these translators, and they are sometimes conflated. The former is known from the records, such as the CSTCC and the *Kao-seng chuan* to have translated some sutras, though neither mention this particular sutra nor any that is connected with “pure land thought” among them. This latter point could, however, according to Fujita’s suggestion, be one reason why the translation is awkward and uses unusual words like “Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching” 無量清淨 for Amitābha/Amitāyus. Others have suggested Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) or Chih-ch’ien as translators. In general, Fujita does not think that such experienced translators as Chu Fa-hu and Chih-ch’ien would have produced the unusual and awkward style as seen in the *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching*, though he sees enough similarity with Chu Fa-hu’s vocabulary to indicate Chu Fa-hu as a possible third choice as probable translator of this sutra. This assessment by Fujita positions the dating of the *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching* between ca. mid-3<sup>rd</sup> to mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, and later than the translation of the *Ta-A-mi-t’o ching* (T 362), which he attributes to Chih-ch’ien. The analysis of these two early translations of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* is difficult and convoluted and there is no generally agreed upon definitive conclusion at present regarding the translator of either the *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching* or the *Ta-A-mi-t’o ching*, though there is current work being done that strongly suggests that Lokakṣema is the translator of the *Ta-A-mi-t’o ching* and that Chih-ch’ien is the translator of the *Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh ching*.<sup>77</sup> There is, however, unanimity on the factor that both are from the earliest strata of sutra translation into Chinese.

For the name of the Buddha Amitābha/Amitāyus the *P’ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361) uses the name Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching 無量清淨 (p. 288a) as well as A-mi-t’o fo 阿彌陀佛 (pp. 287b, 288a), though the former is far more frequent. The factor of using two distinctly different names for the Buddha is somewhat unusual, but more unusual is the name Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching itself. A recent and detailed study of the names of Amitābha/Amitāyus by Jan Nattier<sup>78</sup> throws considerable light on the difficult problem of the term “Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching”, its meaning, derivation, and usage, primarily in relation to the work of Chih-ch’ien, whom she sees as the translator of this sutra.

<sup>74</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p. 302. He further states: Po Yen (maybe a Kuchean), in the Kan-lu period (255-259 A.D.), translated six scriptures, including the *Wu-liang ch’ing ching p’ing teng chüeh ching* (*Amitasuddhasamyakṣambodhisūtra*?). *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>75</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 35-50.

<sup>76</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 35-37.

<sup>77</sup> More recently, Paul Harrison, based on his study of the language and translation style, particularly of the works of Lokakṣema, suggests that this sutra was translated by Chih-ch’ien 支謙 (rather than T 362, the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching*, which has traditionally been attributed to Chih-ch’ien), and that Lokakṣema is rather the translator of the *Ta A-mi-t’o ching* (T 362). That is, the traditional attributions of the translators of these two translations should, in Paul Harrison’s view, be switched.

<sup>78</sup> Nattier, Jan “The Names of Amitābha/Amitāyus in early Chinese Buddhist Translations (2),” *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University [ARIRIAB]* for the Year 2006, Vol. X, (March 2007), pp. 359-394.



She studies the individual component parts of the name in relation to how they appear in other translations known to be by Chih-ch'ien, noting that "no extant Indic language text has yet been identified that contains an obvious counterpart to this name" and that its rare usage in Chinese translations, rather than a mistake (which she obviates) further suggests that whatever form it was in India probably did not circulate widely there. However, she shows that "Wu-liang" in Chih-ch'ien's work was probably based on a Middle Indic form, such as \*Amidā'a, and so she speculates that the "ch'ing-ching" part of the name might be similarly based, perhaps on a Prakrit term such as \*viśūha (< vyūha). Then the two components taken together yield \*Amidā' aviśūha, which would be Amitābhavyūha in Sanskrit, and translated as "the array (Buddha-field) of Amitābha." She suggests that this usage could possibly refer to the Buddha, even though it is a kind of mistaken reading. However, she cites an interesting early poem in praise of Amitābha that shows the correct interpretation when it says "... [Now] his world is named Qingjing [Ch'ing-ching]; His name, having attained buddhahood, is Wu-liang ..." 世界名清淨 / 得佛號無量 ...<sup>79</sup> The poem, as she shows for several reasons, is not following Lokakṣema's *Ta A-mi-t'o ching*, but follows the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching*, primarily because it uses the name Shih-jao wang 世饒王 (the Buddha under whom the monk Dharākara [Amitābha] made his vows), "a name only used among translated scriptures in Chih-ch'ien's *Larger Sukhavatīyūha*" (i.e., the *Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching*).<sup>80</sup> The name Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching was, she notes, also used by Dharmarakṣa in his translation of the *Bhadrakalpika* (see No. 7 below and in the table in Appendix II) and in the *Lao-mu-nü liu-ying ching* (T 560) attributed to Guṇabhadra (see Appendix II, no. 3a),<sup>81</sup> so this name seems to occur other than in Chih-ch'ien's work, therefore it is probably not a "one-time mistake" by a single translator and, as Nattier concludes, it "points to a likelihood, that a Prakrit name such as \*Amidā'a-viśūha, understood as meaning "Measureless Purity", enjoyed at least a limited currency in greater India."<sup>82</sup>

There are several different appellations for Sukhāvati; one descriptive and one phonetic. The former can be seen in the phrase "Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching fo kuo 無量清淨佛國."<sup>83</sup> For the latter we see Hsü-ma-t'i 須摩提 (for Sukhāvati): "his country name [Buddha-land] 國名 is Hsü-ma-t'i 須摩提 and it is located in the western direction (quarter) 正在西方".<sup>84</sup> Though the term Hsü-ma-t'i was not used in the *[Ta]A-mi-t'o ching* (T 362), it was used in Lokakṣema's translation of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* dated 179 A.D. However, like the *[Ta]A-mi-t'o ching* (T 362), the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361) uses the terminology Ho-lou-hsüan 蓋樓亘 for Avalokiteśvara and Ma-ho-na-po 摩訶那鉢 for Mahāsthāmaprāpta, both occurring in chüan 3.<sup>85</sup> In the description of these two great Bodhisattvas, this text is very close to the comparable two passages in the *[Ta]A-mi-t'o ching* (T362) that were translated above, with only minor variations in terminology, such as using Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching for the Buddha's name.<sup>86</sup> Since neither the Buddha nor the Bodhisattva names match the wording (characters) used in the Group 6 colophons, it is highly unlikely that this text served as the basis for the Group 6 Amitāyus triad.

<sup>79</sup> Nattier (2007a), p. 385.

<sup>80</sup> Nattier (2007a), pp. 384-385.

<sup>81</sup> Nattier (2007a), p. 386.

<sup>82</sup> Nattier (2007a), p. 386.

<sup>83</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, pp. 289, 292c, 294c, etc.

<sup>84</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, pp. 292c-293a.

<sup>85</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, pp. 290a, 291a.

<sup>86</sup> *Fo-shuo wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng chüeh ching*, chüan 2, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 290a.

c) *Wu-liang-shou [fo] ching* 無量壽[佛]經, 2 chüan, traditionally said to have been translated into Chinese by K'ang Seng-k'ai 康僧鎧 (Saṃghavarman [Saṃghavarman]), in Chia-p'ing 嘉平 4<sup>th</sup> year (252 A.D.) under the [Ts'ao] Wei, at the Pai-ma ssu 白馬寺 in Loyang. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 360), pp. 265c-279a. Korean Catalogue (K 26). The only extant version in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T360), has been translated into English in at least three cases (the two earlier translations (T 362 and T 361) have not been translated into English).<sup>87</sup>

The problem concerning the translator of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* has been current for some time, and studied by Japanese scholars in particular since the 1920's. The main results of these studies was summarized by Tsukamoto (1985) this way: "The question as to whether or not the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* translation now extant and ascribed to Saṃghavarman (K'ang Seng-k'ai) is in fact the work of Saṃghavarman has been posed by Messrs. Sakino Kōyō, Tokiwa Daijō and Mochizuki Shinkō, the conclusion being that it is to be identified with the "New Sukhavativyuha (*Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*) translated by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün at the Tao-ch'ang ssu in Chien-k'ang in Yung-ch'u 永初 2<sup>nd</sup> year (421)."<sup>88</sup>

According to Fujita Kōtatsu in his 1970 study of Early Pure Land Thought,<sup>89</sup> the attribution to K'ang Seng-k'ai in the presently surviving *Wu-liang-shou ching* in the *Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō* (T 360) started from the Sui Dynasty record *Li-tai san-pao chi* 歷代三寶紀 (597 A.D., by Fei Ch'ang-fang 費長房). This Kang Seng-k'ai attribution did not, however, appear in any of the earlier records, which are generally considered more reliable regarding the early translations. In general, the K'ang Seng-ka'i translation theory has been criticized and is no longer given serious credence among Japanese scholars.<sup>90</sup>

Paul Harrison supports this theory: "If it had indeed been made by Saṃghavarman it would date from c. 252 and be about as old as Zhi Qian's [Chih Chien's] text, but this is most unlikely. However, this version has undoubtedly incorporated materials from earlier translations."<sup>91</sup> Since this is an especially important text for the study of Amitābha/Amitāyus, the major theories regarding the translator and date of translation will be briefly examined here.

#### i. Chu Fa-hu theory

Regarding the Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 (Dharmarakṣa) translation theory, the oldest surviving records on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* appear in several excerpts in the *CTSCC* (ca. 518) and in some of the monk's biographies in both the *CTSCC* and the *Kao-seng chuan* (ca. 530). Several notices in the *CTSCC* specifically mention Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) as translator of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and (or "also

<sup>87</sup> English translations of the *Wu-liang shou ching* (T 360) include:

Max Müller, trans., *Sukhāvativyūha*, Part 2 in *Sacred Books of the East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, Vol. 49, pp. v-107; Inagaki, Hisao (in collaboration with Harold Stewart), *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, Berkeley, CA: The Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995, pp. 21-89; Luis O. Gomez, *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light, Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvati vyūha Sutras*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press and Higashi Honganji Shinshū Ōtani-ha, Kyoto, 1996, pp. 61-111 and 153-222.

<sup>88</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p. 516, note 7.

<sup>89</sup> Fujita (1970), p. 62.

<sup>90</sup> According to Fujita and other Japanese scholars, such as Hirakawa Akira, Mochizuki Shinkō, Kitagawa Genjo, and others, there is very little basis for the Kang Seng-k'ai attribution. Fujita (1970), pp. 62-64.

<sup>91</sup> P. Harrison, "Women in the Pure Land: Some Reflections on the Textual Sources," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 26, No. 6, (Dec. 1998), p. 557.

called”) the *Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh ching*. These CTSCC records are believed to have been based on the earlier catalogue by Tao-an (ca. 374).<sup>92</sup> One states:

... Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 (Dharmarakṣa) put out the *Wu-liang-shou* 無量壽 in 2 chüan 二卷, also called 或云 the *Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh* 無量清淨平等覺 ...<sup>93</sup>

Further, under the listing of translations by Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa), there is:

*Wu-liang-shou ching*, two chuan; also called *Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh ching* 一名無量清淨平等覺經 ...<sup>94</sup>

It is not clear whether the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng-chüeh ching* are two separate translations by Chu Fa-hu or are the same (therefore only one) translation. Subsequently, other records repeat the information and also inject a new issue concerning the number of “paper pages” of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* translation, which results in more discrepancy and confusion.<sup>95</sup> The *K’ai-yüan shih-chiao lu* 開元釋教錄, a respected catalogue by Chih-sheng 智昇 produced in 730 (T’ang) and highly influential on later catalogues, lists the *Wu-liang-shou ching* as a “missing book” (thereby implying that the text with the Chu Fa-hu attribution was then lost) and reiterates the Sui period *Li-tai san-pao chi* in citing Kang Seng-k’ai as translator of the then extant translation, thus eliminating the Chu Fa-hu attribution and sealing the K’ang Seng-ka’i attribution for the extant translation in later catalogues.<sup>96</sup>

In 1965 the Chu Fa-hu theory of translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* received renewed interest when Prof. Nogami Shunjō of Ōtani University published an essay concerning the hand-copied manuscript of the first chüan (shang 上) of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* said to have come from Tun-huang and now in the collection of the Ōtani University library (now called Ryūkoku University in Ōsaka).<sup>97</sup> This manuscript (Fig. 6.16) has a colophon inscription at the end dating the manuscript to the Shen-jui [or: shui] 神瑞 period, which is a [Northern] Wei *nien-hao* dating 414-415 A.D. The colophon inscription reads:

大魏神瑞二年四月弟子王澄爲父母供養經

“Great Wei, Shen-jui 2<sup>nd</sup> year (415 A.D.), 4<sup>th</sup> month, disciple 弟子 Wang Ch’eng 王澄 offered [this] sutra for [my] Father and Mother.”<sup>98</sup>

Prof. Nogami’s study offers this manuscript as a text with *bone fide* date, thus making it the oldest known manuscript of this important sutra. According to Prof. Nogami, the manuscript closely follows the version T 360 in the *Daizōkyō*, with some minor differences. Further, he argues that this text and its date therefore obviate the theory that the current surviving *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) was translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün in the South under the [Liu] Sung at the

<sup>92</sup> Fujita (1970), p. 64.

<sup>93</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, p. 14a.

<sup>94</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55 (T 2145), p. 7c.

<sup>95</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 64-65 and footnotes 2, 3, and 4.

<sup>96</sup> See Fujita (1970), pp. 64-68 for more details and his analysis.

<sup>97</sup> Nogami, Shunjō, (ed.), *Ōtani Daigaku shozō: Tonkō koshakyō* (Ancient copies of Buddhist Scriptures discovered in the Tun-huang Caves now preserved in the Ōtani University), Kyoto: Ōtani Daigaku, Tōyōgaku Kenkyūshitsu, 1965-1972.

<sup>98</sup> S. Nogami, “*Muryōjukyō kanyakukō*” (On the Translation into Chinese of the *Wu-liang shou ching*), an introduction to the copied Buddhist scripture of the Shen-shui period discovered in the Tun-huang caves, in Nogami (ed.), *Ōtani Daigaku shozō: Tonkō koshakyō*, Kyoto, 1965, p. 157.

Tao-ch'ang ssu and put out in ca. 421 A.D. (this will be discussed more below). Instead, Nogami presents a case that the translator was probably Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) in ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century in North China. Though Nogami counters the Buddhahadra/Pao-yün theory of translation primarily on the basis of the 415 dated, hand-copied Tun-huang manuscript, he also offers some other support for Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) as the translator of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, though, as he admits, the evidence for the latter points are not strong.<sup>99</sup>

Fujita Kōtatsu devoted a chapter to an analysis of the Shen-shui [jui] “copied manuscript” said to come from Tun-huang and now in the Ôtani University library collection.<sup>100</sup> Here he was able, through quite a thorough preliminary comparative study with other manuscripts, to cast substantial doubt regarding the date of this manuscript. However, the arguments are complicated and as yet unsubstantiated. Mainly, they suggest, for various reasons, that:

- 1) the manuscript may be a product of the period ca. 530 when the then ruler of Tun-huang produced many copied sutras. Here he also offers the opinion of a calligraphy expert that the calligraphy of the 415 A.D. copied sutra was consistent with others of the late Northern Wei period, ca. 520-530, and was not like the writing of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2) the colophon writing may have been added at a later time, though this is only conjecture from the general appearance of the writing and the “washed” effect of the paper around the area of the date inscription.
- 3) in tracing the history of this manuscript before it came into the Ôtani collection, there could be some reason to suspect its authenticity.

All of these points are examined by Prof. Fujita, but none are resolved, as he himself admits.<sup>101</sup>

Fujita offers further points in negating the Chu Fa-hu translation theory, such as the differences in the vocabulary used by Chu Fa-hu in his known translations and that of the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360). Among his examples (18 of them)<sup>102</sup> he cites the following:

in the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*)

Avalokiteśvara:	Kuang-shih-yin 光世音
Tuṣita	兜術天
nayuta	那術
quaked 6 times	六反震動
Sands of the Ganges River	江河沙

in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*

Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音
兜率天
那由天
六種震動
恒沙

<sup>99</sup> Nogami (1965b), pp. 160-163

<sup>100</sup> Fujita (1970), Chapter IV, pp. 77-91.

<sup>101</sup> It may require a scientific test of the paper to obtain more evidence, and more assessment is needed from experts to determine if the colophon is by a different hand than the text, but even that would not prove that the manuscript was faulty. It could be noted here, regarding the inscription of the 415 A.D. copied manuscript, that the wording is not usual in the image inscriptions of early 5<sup>th</sup> century. For example, judging from the remaining objects, the T'o-pa Wei did not appear to use “Ta Wei” in the inscriptions until ca. 442. See the stone pedestal now in the Shodō Bijutsukan, Tokyo. See S. Matsubara, *Chūgoku Bukkyō chōkoku-shi kenkyū*, Tokyo, 1966, no. 11. Furthermore, inscriptions of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century generally include a day and month date in the date, and the Ôtani manuscript does not have that.

<sup>102</sup> Fujita (1970), p. 67.

Further, I can add the differences in the terms for Sukhāvātī (also see Appendix II, 2c):

Chu Fa-hu in the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (286 A.D.): An-yang kuo 安養國

Kumārajīva in the Smaller *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* (402 A.D.): Chi-lo kuo-t'u 極樂國土

*Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360): 淨土; 安養; 安養國; 安樂國; 無量壽國; 無量佛國; 無量壽佛及其國土.

From these latter examples, it can be seen that in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* there is a variety of old terms and new terms for Sukhāvātī. It uses the term (only once) “An-yang” 安養 used by Chu Fa-hu, but it does not use the term “Chi-lo kuo-t'u” 極樂國土 seen in Kumārajīva's translation of the (Smaller) *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*. It also has the new term “pure land” (ch'ing-t'u 淨土) and “Wu-liang-shou fo chi ch'i-kuo-t'u” 無量壽佛及其國土. The varieties would seem to indicate that there was no universal or standard form at the time the *Wu-liang-shou ching* was translated. By the time of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* (ca. 424-442—see discussion below, No.17) and Appendix II, 17), the term seems to have been settled as “Chi-lo kuo-t'u” 極樂國土, the term Kumārajīva used in the (Smaller) *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* translated in 402.

Finally, it can be noted that in the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of the monk Seng-chi 僧濟, disciple of Hui-yüan on Lu-shan in the South, it is stated that when Seng-chi was dying, Hui-yüan had the monks assemble and recite for him the *Wu-liang-shou ching*:

... 又請衆僧夜集爲轉無量壽經 ... [Hui-yüan] also called the assembly of monks in the evening to chant the *Wu-liang-shou ching* ...<sup>103</sup>

This is particularly interesting because it references the sutra itself. However, it is not completely certain that this citation refers to the presently extant *Wu-liang-shou ching*, though it has the exact same title, or whether it refers to one of the early translations of the (Larger) *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*. If it is the former, then it could indicate that it was translated before 416 (the death date of Hui-yüan). It could therefore argue for a Chu Fa-hu translation. On the other hand, the *Kao-seng chuan* biography could be simply using a title that was current ca. 530, the time of compilation of the *Kao-seng chuan*, and not necessarily be date specific to ca. 416 or earlier. So at this juncture, there is still no clear resolution regarding Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa) as the translator of the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360), considered the most important of the translations of the (Larger) *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* and the one of the three fundamental texts generally used by the later Pure Land schools of East Asia.

## ii. Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün theory

The CTSCC records the following regarding Buddhahadra (Chüeh-hsien 覺賢) and the translation called the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*:

In the section listing Buddhahadra's translations, there is this listing: *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* in 2 chüan: 新無量壽, 二卷, Yung-ch'u 2<sup>nd</sup> year 永初二年 put out at the Tao-ch'ang (ssu) 於道場(寺)出.<sup>104</sup>

And again in another section with Buddhahadra's translations:

*Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* in 2 chüan, Sung Yung-ch'u 2<sup>nd</sup> year 宋永初二年 put out at Tao-ch'ang ssu 於道場寺出; one record says put out at the Ho-shan ssu 合山寺出.<sup>105</sup>

The CTSCC does not, however, record Buddhahadra in the longer excerpt on the translation cited at the outset of this section on the *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* (see above p. 189 and in the CSTCC, p. 14a). With regard to the biographies of Buddhahadra in the CTSCC and the *Kao-seng chuan*, the former

<sup>103</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 3, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 362b.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., *Daizōkyō*, 55, p. 11c.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., *Daizōkyō*, 55, p. 12a.



mentions the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* among his translations,<sup>106</sup> but his biography in the *Kao-seng chuan* does not include it.<sup>107</sup> Thus, of the five records in the *CSTCC* concerning the *Wu-liang-shou ching* or *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*, three attribute the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* to Buddhahadra. However, the *CSTCC* also records that Pao-yün translated the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*: "... Shih Pao-yün 釋寶雲 put out the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou* (*New Wu-liang-shou ching*) 新無量壽 in 2 chüan ..." <sup>108</sup>

Pao-yün's biography in the *CSTCC* and in the *Kao-seng chuan* both mention that he translated and put out the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou* [ching]: "... [寶]雲譯出新無量壽 ..." <sup>109</sup> So, there are also three records in the *CTSCC* and *Kao-seng chuan* combined that attribute the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou* to Pao-yün. Pao-yün is one of the important translation monks of the late Eastern Chin to early [Liu] Sung in South China (near Chien-k'ang). He also is famous for travelling to India at the time of Fa-hsien (he left China ca. 400 and travelled together with Fa-hsien for parts of the journey), visiting the sacred sites of India, and learning the foreign languages. When he returned to China, he went to Ch'ang-an to study with Kumārajīva and became a disciple of Buddhahadra. When Buddhahadra was expelled from Ch'ang-an, Pao-yün left together with him. They (Buddhahadra also had 40 followers) travelled to Lu shan and stayed for over a year (until ca. 412) with Hui-yüan. The biography of Pao-yün in both the *CTSCC* and the *Kao-seng chuan* relate these events and his later life in Chien-k'ang. Because of the relevant data in these, the *Kao-seng chuan* biography (the longer of the two), is translated here in full:

Shih Pao-yün 釋寶雲. His family lineage is not clear. It has been said that he was a Liang chou 涼州 person. He became a monk when he was young. He was very diligent and accomplished in study and practice. His mind was harmonious, strong and pure—away from the world. Therefore, when he was young he was famous for propriety, purity and simplicity. In searching the Dharma he was sincere, forgetting his body and sacrificing for the Path. He personally wished to see the sacred sites and to widely investigate what was important in the sutras. Subsequently, at the beginning of Chin's Lung-an 晉隆安 era (397-402) he went far away to the Western Regions with Fa-hsien 法顯 and Chih-yen 智嚴. They mutually followed each other, before and after. They crossed the desert, climbed and crossed the stony mountains, [taking] the difficulties and dangers without thinking them to be difficult. Subsequently they passed Yü-tien 于闐 (Khotan), T'ien-chu 天竺 (India) and various countries. They saw the religious and spiritual places. When passing the field of rakṣasas (lo-sha 羅刹), [they] heard the sound of the heavenly drum, and saw Śākyamuni's projection image (Shih-chia ying 釋迦影) and paid respects (li 禮). In the foreign regions [Pao]-yün widely learned Sanskrit (fan shu 梵書) and the sounds and letters of the various countries of T'ien-chu (India). He learned the antiquities and knew all completely. Later he returned to Ch'ang-an and followed the dhyāna master Buddhahadra (Fo-t'o-pa-t'o 佛駄跋陀) and engaged in dhyāna and advanced in the Path. Suddenly the dhyāna master (Buddhahadra) was wrongly expelled by the [Later] Ch'in monks 秦僧 [of Ch'ang-an]. [Buddhahadra's] followers all suffered the same in their blame, and Pao-yün also left. [They] met Lu-shan's Shih Hui-yüan 釋慧遠 and explained the expulsion affair. Together [Buddhahadra and Pao-yün] returned to the capital (Chien-k'ang) and peacefully stayed at the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺.<sup>110</sup> Many monks thought

<sup>106</sup> *CTSCC*, chüan 13, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 104a.

<sup>107</sup> The biography of Buddhahadra from the *Kao-seng chuan* is translated in full in Chapter 7.

<sup>108</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, p. 14a. Also, for the entire quote see the opening of the section on *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* translated above on pp. 189-190.

<sup>109</sup> *CSTCC*, chüan 15, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, p. 113b; *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 3, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, p. 339.

<sup>110</sup> Known as the "cave of the dhyāna masters", also called the Tou-ch'ang ssu 闍場寺. See Rhie (2002), pp. 15, 62, 110.



Pao-yün's will was strong and that he would propagate Buddhism in difficult places. He humbly consulted, had their respect and was likable.

Pao-yün translated and put out the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou* 雲譯出新無量壽. Later he put out various sutras, mostly what was under his supervision (i.e., revised Buddhahadra's translations). He understood the sounds and languages completely correctly of China (Hua 華) and of the foreigners (jung 戎). Under Pao-yün's supervision the texts were all believed and followed. Earlier, the Kuan-chung (Ch'ang-an) monk Chu Fo-nien 竺佛念 was good at putting out translations. In the two dynasties of Fu [Chien] and Yao [Hsing] he put out many sutras. Left of the Yangtzu 江左 (i.e., in the East), with regard to translating Sanskrit, no one surpassed Pao-yün in translations. Therefore in the Chin-Sung 晉宋之際 period he greatly propagated the Dharma store. The monk Hui-kuan 慧觀 and others were friends and admired him. By nature Pao-yün was good at secluded living and he valued quietude. He subsequently went to the Liu-ho shan-ssu 六合山寺. He translated and put out the *Fo-pen hsing tsan ching* 佛本行贊經 (*Buddhapūvacaryā Sūtra*, T 193). In the mountain there were a lot of poor people who loved to steal. So Pao-yün preached the Dharma and attracted a lot of them to change. Eight out of ten families became believers (kung-yang). Soon Tao-ch'ang ssu's Hui-kuan, at the time of nearing his death, invited Pao-yün to return to the capital and manage the temple responsibilities. So Pao-yün had to return. He stayed at the Tao-ch'ang [ssu] about a year, then he returned to the Liu-ho shan ssu. In yüan-chia 元嘉 26<sup>th</sup> year he died at the mountain temple. His age was 74. On his travels to foreign countries, there are some separate biography records.<sup>111</sup>

After Buddhahadra and Pao-yün left Lu shan, they eventually went to the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺 in Chien-k'ang 建康 (this is also stated in the biography of Buddhahadra (see Chapter 7), who went there at the invitation of Emperor Wu). Pao-yün eventually went to the Liu-ho mountain temple (east of Chien-k'ang), which is not far from the Tao-ch'ang ssu. The Tao-ch'ang ssu was a great temple of the capital at the time, known as the "cave of the dhyāna masters." It is quite possible that Buddhahadra and Pao-yün collaborated on the translation of the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching*. Though the data does not specifically state this, and we do not know if the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* is the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching*, there are many Japanese scholars of Chinese Buddhism, including Fujita, that take this as the most reasonable explanation concerning the translation of the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching*.<sup>112</sup>

Fujita also states that he sees no evidence that the *Wu-liang-shou ching* was used by Hui-yüan (334-416), but he does not comment on the statement from the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Seng-yu cited above, which mentioned that Hui-yüan had the "monks assemble and chant the *Wu-liang-shou ching*" for Seng-yu, who was dying. Also, the reason for Fujita's dismissal of the usage of the name "Wu-liang-shou" for Amitāyus in the eulogy of Chih-tun (early Eastern Chin) is weak,<sup>113</sup> especially considering it is a *bone-fide* writing from the Eastern Chin period. So there still is no overwhelming evidence that the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) is the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* which the early

<sup>111</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 3, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50 (T 2059), pp. 339b-340a. Also see R. Shih, *Biographies des moines Éminents de Houei-Kiao*, Louvain, 1968, pp. 123-125. Also biography in the *CTSCC*, chüan 15, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 23a-b.

<sup>112</sup> See Fujita's detailed analysis in Fujita (1970), pp. 69-75. Further, he thinks that the translation was done prior to that of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*, which is probably done by Kālayāśas between 424-442 (*Ibid.*, pp. 74-75), and that the *Wu-liang shou ching* was probably a translation by both Buddhahadra and Pao-yün and not by Pao-yün alone (*Ibid.*, p. 69). Fujita essentially maintains this view in his recent book (based on the 1970 book), *Jōdo sanbukyō no kenkyū*, Tokyo, 2007, pp. 76-87.

<sup>113</sup> Fujita (1970), pp. 73-74.

records (CSTCC and *Kao-seng chuan*) say in three out of five instances was translated by Buddhahadra or in three different instances was translated by Pao-yün or, as taken by some, probably by both of them in collaboration, and put out in 421 A.D., the one date mentioned in one of the CTSCC records regarding Buddhahadra's translations. These are certainly reasonably credible indications, but they are not so totally consistent as to be definitive. We will return to this issue again after continuing our review of the text materials and further considering the Group 6 niche materials.

### iii. Terminology of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*

Finally, with respect to the word usage of the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360), a number of scholars have noted that it does not conform to the Three Kingdoms or Western Chin period vocabulary and style of writing (Mochizuki, etc.). Fujita offers 12 examples of terminology in the “old” style and the “new” style (the “old” referring to translations done before Kumārajīva and the “new” referring to translations by Kumārajīva). He compares these with the usage in the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching*, which in those 12 cases exactly follows the Kumārajīva translation vocabulary.<sup>114</sup> These are a variety of terms, and the only one that pertains directly to our problem concerning the terminology in the colophons of Group 6 is Kuang-shih-yin 光世音 (“old”) and Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音 (“new”); the latter occurs in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*.

With specific regard to the colophons of the Group 6 sculptures, there is a very close match with the characters for the corresponding names in the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching*:

<i>Wu-liang-shou ching</i>	Cave 169 Group 6 colophons
1) Buddha: 無量壽佛	無量壽佛
2) Avalokiteśvara: 觀世音菩薩	□觀世音菩薩
3) Mahāsthāmaprāpta: 大勢至菩薩	得大勢至菩薩

The only difference is the usage of “te 得” as the initial character for Mahāsthāmaprāpta (and there is one character apparently missing from the beginning of the Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa in the Group 6 inscription). Comparing with the terminology used in the two early translations (T 362 and T 361—see above 2 a and b; also see Appendix II), we can see a definite change. The consequences of this factor will be considered further when we return to this issue after continuing our survey of other texts.

### d) *Brief Synopsis and Some Pertinent Factors in the Wu-liang-shou ching with Respect to Considerations of the Group 6 Niche*

The *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* has been discussed and analyzed extensively by Chinese, Japanese and Western scholars of Buddhism, and the reader can be referred to these studies for more extensive textual and doctrinal study (see note 87 above). For our purposes here, however, a very brief synopsis as well as certain descriptive phraseology are useful from the point of view of understanding the textual basis for the visual imagery of the Group 6 ensemble of sculptures and paintings. Some examples are given here which will be used in assessing how the makers of Group 6 may have been expressing the visual and symbolic elements of Amitāyus and his Buddha-land as described in the texts translated into Chinese.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Fujita (1970), p. 72.

<sup>115</sup> Citations refer to English translation by Inagaki and Stewart, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, Berkeley, 1995 and 2003. The Chinese text *Fo-shuo Wu-liang shou ching* (T 360) is from the *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 360), pp. 265-279.

i. Summary of the Text *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360): chüan 1 (shang 上)

The setting for the sutra is the Vulture Peak where Śākyamuni Buddha speaks to a gathering of 12,000 great monks (all sages). Also gathered are “the Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas (Ta-ch’eng chung p’u-sa 大乘衆菩薩), including all those of the Auspicious Kalpa (Hsien-chieh 賢劫), such as Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (P’u-hsien p’u-sa 普賢菩薩), the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Miao-te p’u-sa 妙德菩薩) and the Bodhisattva Maitreya (Tzu-shih p’u-sa 慈氏菩薩)”:

又與大乘衆菩薩俱。普賢菩薩，妙德菩薩，慈氏菩薩等，此賢劫中一切菩薩。又賢護等十六正士。<sup>116</sup>

Prompted by a question from Ānanda, who notices the especially glorious appearance of the Buddha and asks the reason, Buddha, pleased by Ānanda’s question, then teaches the assembly about the king Dharmākara, who, eons ago became awakened by hearing the Buddha Lokeśvararāja. He renounced his kingdom and in time came to make 48 vows before the Buddha Lokeśvararāja. These vows establish and describe his aspirations for beings and for his Buddha-land, which would be fulfilled if he became a Buddha. Throughout the declaration of these vows (which are the heart of the Buddhism that came to be centered on Amitābha/Amitāyus) there is frequent language citing the ten-directions, the lands of the ten-directions, and the beings in the lands of the ten-directions. For example:

... sentient beings in the lands of the ten-directions 十方衆生 ...<sup>117</sup>

... Bodhisattvas in lands of the other directions 他方國土諸菩薩衆 ...<sup>118</sup>

... my name will be heard throughout the ten-directions 名聲超十方 .... “When my vows are fulfilled and my wisdom perfected, I shall be the sovereign of the three worlds (san-chieh 三界) ...<sup>119</sup>

After the 48 vows are stated, Ānanda then talks with the Buddha Śākyamuni about Amitāyus and His World, including about his boundless light and his endless life. Then various names of Amitāyus are cited:

“...The majestic light of the Buddha Amitāyus is the most exalted. No other Buddha’s light can match his 諸佛光明所不能及。The light of some Buddhas illuminates a hundred Buddha-lands 或有佛光照百佛世界, and that of others, a thousand Buddha-lands 或千佛世界。Briefly, that of Amitāyus illuminates the eastern Buddha-lands as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges. In the same way, it illuminates the Buddha-lands in the south, west, and north, in each of the four intermediate directions, and above and below ... For this reason Amitāyus is called by the following names: Buddha of Infinite Light, Boundless Light, Unhindered Light ... 故無量壽佛號無量光佛，無邊佛，無礙佛 ...”<sup>120</sup>

As the culminating statement the references are in terms of the “ten-directions”:

“... The light of Amitāyus shines brilliantly, illuminating all the Buddha-lands of the ten directions 無量壽佛光明顯赫照耀十方諸佛國土 ...”<sup>121</sup> The life of Amitāyus is so long that it is impossible for anyone to calculate it (it cannot be encompassed by any means of reckoning or by any metaphysical expression) ...<sup>122</sup>

<sup>116</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 360), p. 265c. Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 21; (2003), p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 268b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 34 (18); (2003), p. 16 (18).

<sup>118</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 269a; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 37 (36); (2003), p. 18 (36).

<sup>119</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 269b (in verses); Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 39 (8.9); (2003), p. 21 (8.9).

<sup>120</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 270a; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 44; (2003), p. 25.

<sup>121</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 270b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 44; (2003), p. 25.

<sup>122</sup> *Daizōkyō*, p. 270b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 45 (12); (2003), p. 26 (section 12).

Some other qualities of his Buddha-land include the following:

They are the most excellent sounds in all the worlds of the ten directions ...<sup>123</sup> The rippling water forms meandering streams, which join and flow into each other ...<sup>124</sup> Buddhas come from the light rays of the lotuses and each Buddha emits rays and expounds Dharma to beings in the ten directions.<sup>125</sup>

ii. Summary of the Text *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360): chüan 2 (hsia 下)

The Buddha said to Ānanda, “Sentient beings who are born in that Buddha land all reside among those assured of nirvāṇa 佛告阿難, 其有衆生彼國者, 皆悉住於正定之聚 ... All Buddha Tathāgatas in the ten directions, as numerous as sands of the River Ganges, together praise the inconceivable supernal virtue of Amitāyus 十方恒沙諸佛如來, 皆共讚歎無量壽佛威神功德不可思議 ...<sup>126</sup> Devas and humans in the worlds of the ten directions who sincerely aspire to be born in that land can be classified into three grades 十方世界諸天人民, 其有至心願生彼國, 凡有三輩 ... The higher grade of aspirants ... when they are about to die, Amitāyus together with a host of sages, will appear before them 無量壽佛與諸大衆現其人前. Then they will follow him and attain birth in his land. At once they will be born by transformation spontaneously from within seven-jeweled lotus flowers 即隨彼佛往生其國. 便於七寶華中自然化生 ...<sup>127</sup>

For those of middle grade, a transformed body of Amitāyus appears 無量壽佛化現其身...<sup>128</sup> For those of lower grade, they will see Buddha in a dream and be born in the Pure land 夢見彼佛亦得往生 ...<sup>129</sup> All innumerable, uncountable and inconceivable Buddha Tathāgatas, in the worlds of the ten directions praise him 十方世界無量無邊不可思議諸佛如來莫不稱歎 ...<sup>130</sup> East direction Bodhisattvas visit to worship, so do those of the South, West, North and from the intermediate, above and below directions. All from these directions go to pay homage to Amitāyus ...”<sup>131</sup>

The following passage is the first in this sutra to mention Avalokiteśvara:

“... Avalokiteśvara, the Exalted Being 大士觀世音, having respectfully arranged His clothes and bowed his head, [in verses]  
 Asked the Buddha [Amitāyus], “Why are you smiling?  
 Reverently I enquire, Please tell me why.”  
 The Buddha’s majestic voice was like thunder,  
 Producing wonderful sounds in the eight qualities of voice:  
 “Because I am about to give predictions to the bodhisattvas,  
 I shall now explain to you. Listen carefully!”...<sup>132</sup>

... The Buddha [Śākyamuni] said to Ānanda: “All the bodhisattvas in the land of Amitāyus will ultimately attain the stage of becoming a Buddha after one more life. Excepted are those who have made original vows for the sake of sentient beings, resolving to cultivate the merit of realizing their great vows to save all sentient beings. Ānanda, each *śrāvaka* in the Buddha land of Amitāyus emits a light for

<sup>123</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 48; (2003), p. 29 (section 15).

<sup>124</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 49; (2003), p. 30 (section 16).

<sup>125</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 53; (2003), p. 34 (section 21)

<sup>126</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 272b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 54 (22); (2003), p. 35 (section 22).

<sup>127</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 272b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 54 (23); (2003), p. 35 (section 23).

<sup>128</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 272b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 54(24); (2003), p. 35 (section 24).

<sup>129</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 272c; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 55(25); (2003), p. 36 (section 25).

<sup>130</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 272c; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 55(26); (2003), p. 36 (section 26).

<sup>131</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 272c; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 56; (2003), p. 37.

<sup>132</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 273a; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 57 verses 10-11; (2003), p. 38 (verses 10-11).

one fathom around his body 諸聲聞衆身光一尋. The light of a bodhisattva shines a hundred *yojanas* 菩薩光明照百由旬. There are two Bodhisattvas who are the most dignified; their majestic light reaches everywhere in the universe of a thousand million worlds.” 有二菩薩最尊第一; 威神光明普照三千大千世界. Ānanda asked, “What are the names of these two Bodhisattvas?” The Buddha replied, “One is called Avalokiteśvara 一名觀世音 and the other, Mahāsthāmaprāpta 二名大勢至. They had both performed bodhisattva practices in this world, and, at the end of life, were born by transformation 化生 in that Buddha-land ...”<sup>133</sup>

The Buddha [Śākyamuni] tells about the virtues of Bodhisattvas and what they do in that Pure Land: “Having reached the end of the single path, they have gone to the Other Shore. Since they have cut the net of doubt, wisdom arises in their minds. Within the Buddha dharma there is nothing that they do not comprehend ...”<sup>134</sup>

The Buddha [Śākyamuni] then speaks to the Bodhisattva Maitreya (Mi-lo 彌勒) and to devas and humans, telling them the nature of humans.<sup>135</sup> Maitreya responds, praising the Buddha: “... his wisdom clearly surveys things in the eight directions and above and below, penetrating all in the past, present and future 見八方上下去來今事 ... and his influence extends boundlessly in the ten directions.”<sup>136</sup> Buddha Śākyamuni explains the reality of the five realms of *saṃsāra*, with the five evils, which he details along with the five goods. This is a harsh critique of the world.<sup>137</sup> The Bodhisattva Maitreya (Mi-lo) asks Buddha to explain why some inhabitants [of the Pure Land of Amitāyus] are in the embryonic state and the others are born by transformation.<sup>138</sup> The Buddha Śākyamuni explains the reasons for that: the main reason for embryonic birth is because those beings harbored doubt and lacked wisdom in their previous lives.<sup>139</sup> He encourages Maitreya to have resolute faith in the supreme wisdom of the Buddha.<sup>140</sup>

Then the Buddha speaks more of those who will be born in the Pure Land from this world and from the Buddha lands in other directions. The individual names of the Buddhas of these “other directions” are given (13 of them; with the 14<sup>th</sup> being our world), but the directions are not specified. These Buddhas are mentioned in this context for the purpose of saying that the Bodhisattvas from those Buddha lands will be the ones who visit Amitāyus. Then the Buddha Śākyamuni says to Maitreya, “... Not only do the bodhisattvas from those fourteen Buddha lands visit that land, but also bodhisattvas from innumerable Buddha lands in the ten directions, whose number is incalculable ...”<sup>141</sup> The final sentence states: “... When the Buddha finished delivering this sutra, the bodhisattva Maitreya and the bodhisattvas from the lands in the ten directions, together with the Elder Ānanda, other great *śrāvakas*, and all those in the assembly, without exception, rejoiced at the Buddha’s discourse.”<sup>142</sup>

<sup>133</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 273b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 60; (2003), p. 41.

<sup>134</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 274a; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 63; (2003), p. 44.

<sup>135</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 274b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 65; (2003), p. 46.

<sup>136</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 275b; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 70; (2003), p. 51.

<sup>137</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 275c; Inagaki and Stewart (1995), pp. 73-80; (2003), pp. 54-62.

<sup>138</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 43.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87. However, it is important to note that the designation ten-directions is used here only as a single phrase, and does not include the naming of the direction or of the Buddhas of those lands.

<sup>142</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 89.



3) *Mahālaṅkāparipṛcchā Sūtra*

a) *Lao nū jen ching* 老女人經 (Scripture of the Old Woman), 1 chüan, translation attributed to Chih-ch'ien (ca. 223-253 in Wu). *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 559), pp. 911c-912b. Korean Catalogue (K 216).

This text, though short, mentions rebirth in the realm of Amitābha:<sup>143</sup>

“... [When her] current long life is exhausted [she] will be born in the realm of A-mi-t'o fo and worship various Buddhas 今壽盡當生阿彌陀佛國中供養諸佛 ...”<sup>144</sup>

b) *Fo-shuo lao mu ching* 佛說老母經, 1 chüan, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 561), p. 912c-913b (listed in the *Sung-lu* 宋錄 and apparently considered an anonymous translation of the [Liu] Sung period [420-479]). Korean Catalogue (K217).

Here the pertinent passage is phrased similarly as seen in T 559:

“... [She] will be born in Amitābha's realm and worship various Buddhas 當生阿彌陀佛國中供養諸佛 ...”<sup>145</sup>

c) *Lao mu nū liu ying ching* 老母女六英經, 1 chüan, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 560), p. 912b-c. Korean Catalogue (K 218). This translation is attributed to Guṇabhadra, active in translation during the [Liu] Sung from ca. 435-443. The text is relatively different from the previous two with a different vocabulary, even for the similar passage:

“... [She among] the myriad beings will be born in front of (or: in the path of 道) Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching Buddha 衆生無量清淨佛前 ...”<sup>146</sup>

Both T 559 and T 561 are virtually the same with regard to most phraseology, including the phraseology of this particular passage, but T 560 is quite remarkably different in using the archaic name *Wu-liang-ch'ing-chingfo*, a term seen in the (Larger) *Sukhāvativyūha* translation T 361, probably translated by Chih-ch'ien 支謙, according to the most recent assessments by Harrison and Nattier (see Chapter 6, section II.A.2.a.2b)).

A recent study by Jan Nattier sheds light on this triad of translations of a text which apparently had some popularity in China during this early period.<sup>147</sup> The theme evolves around an old woman who was very wise in the Dharma, but very poor. The Buddha explains to Ānanda that in a previous life she had been his mother, which caused her wisdom, but had prevented him from leaving home to become a monk, which was the cause of her poverty for 500 lifetimes. “Now, however, when she dies she will be reborn in the realm of Amitābha, and after 68 *koṭis* of *kalpas* have passed, she herself will attain buddhahood.”<sup>148</sup>

Through a close examination of the vocabulary and style of the two early translations (T 559 and T 561), Nattier comes to the conclusion in a well argued and documented presentation that Chih-ch'ien 支謙 is not the translator of T 559 (as attributed in the *Daizōkyō*), but is rather the translator of T 561 (considered anonymous [Liu] Sung in the *Daizōkyō*). Further, Nattier shows that T 559 is likely to have been the earlier of these two translations, probably in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century

<sup>143</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p. 149.

<sup>144</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 559), p. 912b.

<sup>145</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 561), p. 913b.

<sup>146</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 560), p. 912c.

<sup>147</sup> Jan Nattier, “A reassessment of the dates and translator attributions of the *Laonüren jing* (T559) and the *Laomu jing* (T561),” Brief Communication, in *ARIRIAB*, Vol. X (March, 2007b), pp. 529-532.

<sup>148</sup> Nattier (2007b), p.529.



during the late Later Han or very early Three Kingdoms at the latest. The terminology of the third translation (T 560) is clearly later than both in her opinion—perhaps ca. mid 5<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly by Guṇabhadra.

It is interesting to note that the Chih-ch'ien 支謙 translation (T 561; in Nattier's view) of the *Lao nü jen ching* uses the name “A-mi-t'o fo kuo” 阿彌陀佛國, rather than “Wu-liang ch'ing ching fo kuo” 無量清淨佛國, both of which are used in the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching*, attributed by some to Chih-ch'ien. The persistent work of scholars is beginning to unravel the difficult problems of some of these early text translations into Chinese.

#### 4) *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*

a) *Wei-mo chieh ching* 維摩詰經, 2 chüan, translated by Chih-ch'ien 支謙 (ca. 223-228) in the Wu kingdom in the South. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 474), pp. 519a-536c. Korean Catalogue (K 120).

b) *Wei mo chieh so shuo ching* 維摩詰所說經, 3 chüan, translated by Kumārajīva, 406 A.D. in Ch'ang-an under the Later Ch'in. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 475), pp. 520a-557b. Korean Catalogue (K 119).

In both translations Amitābha/Amitāyus is mentioned in Chapter 7. The name occurs as the seventh “wonderful thing” cited by the Goddess, in this case a list of Buddhas of the ten-directions who visit the house of Vimalakīrti.

In Chih-ch'ien's translation, the Chinese characters used for Amitābha/Amitāyus are “...Wu-liang 無量...如來” and the name appears as seventh in the listing of Buddhas. For Śākyamuni, who is first in the list, Chih-ch'ien uses Shih-chia-wen 釋迦文. The characters “ch'ing-ching” 清淨 are used (in the 8<sup>th</sup> wonderful thing) for describing the house as a pure land.<sup>149</sup>

In Kumārajīva's translation, the characters A-mi-t'o fo 阿彌陀佛 are used and he is second in the list after Śākyamuni, who is translated as Shih-chia-mou-ni fo 釋迦牟尼佛.<sup>150</sup>

... Furthermore, reverend Śāriputra, at the wish of this good man, to this house come the innumerable Tathāgatas of the ten directions, such as the Tathāgatas Śākyamuni, Amitābha, Akṣobhya, Ratnaśrī, Ratnārcis, Ratnacandra, Ratnavyūha, Duṣprasāha, Sarvārthasiddha, Ratnabahula, Simhakīrti, Simhasvara, and when they come they teach the door of Dharma called the “Secrets of the Tathāgathas” and then depart. That is the seventh strange and wonderful thing...<sup>151</sup>

In Chih-ch'ien's translation Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva is mentioned in a list of Bodhisattvas in chüan 1: the characters are Ta-shih-chih p'u-sa 大勢至菩薩.<sup>152</sup> This is the first time to see the usage of these characters, which are completely different from those used for Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the two early versions of the *Sukhāvativyūha*. In the Chih-ch'ien translation of the *Wei-mo chieh ching*, Avalokiteśvara is not mentioned, but it is mentioned in the later translation by Kumārajīva.

In Kumārajīva's translation both Bodhisattvas are mentioned in the list of Bodhisattvas in chüan 2. The characters used are: Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa 觀世音菩薩 and Te-ta-shih p'u-sa 得大勢菩薩.<sup>153</sup> Compared with Chih-ch'ien's translation, with respect to Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the 406 A.D. translation

<sup>149</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, p. 529a.

<sup>150</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 475), p. 548b.

<sup>151</sup> Robert Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, University Park and London, 1981, p. 61 (translation is from the Tibetan version with reference to Kumārajīva's translation). The “Secrets of the Tathāgatas” according to E. Lamotte is probably a sutra called the *Tathāgātācintyaguhyānirdeśa* (T 310). *Ibid.*, in footnote 23 on p. 128.

<sup>152</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, chüan 1, p. 519b.

<sup>153</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, chüan 2, p. 537b.

by Kumārajīva shows the addition of the character “Te 得” and the absence of the character “chih 至”, both of which, however appear in the Group 6 colophon inscription for Mahāsthāmaprāpta: 得大勢至菩薩. The important link between Chih-ch’ien and Kumārajīva occurs in the translations of Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu).

##### 5) *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra)

The two most important and pertinent translations for our purposes here are:

a) *Cheng fa-hua ching* 正法華經, 10 chüan, translated by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu 竺法護), 286 A.D. in Ch’ang-an. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), pp. 63a-134b. Korean Catalogue (K 117).

b) *Miao fa lien hua ching* 妙法蓮華經, 7 chüan, translated by Kumārajīva in 406 or 405 in Ch’ang-an under the Later Ch’in. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), pp. 1c-62b. (K116).

In Chapter VII (The Apparitional City) of Kumārajīva’s recension (T 262), the Buddha Amitāyus is mentioned among the pairs of Buddhas named for each of the four directions and four intermediate directions: “... In the west there are two Buddhas called Amitāyus and Sarvalokadhātūpruḍavidvegapatyattirṇa ...”<sup>154</sup> 西方二佛一名阿彌陀, 二名度一切世間苦惱 ...<sup>155</sup> The comparable passage in Chapter VII in the translation of Dharmarakṣa (T 363) does not mention Amitābha/Amitāyus, but has the following: Western direction Ta-t’ung-chung-hui Tathāgata, Correctly Enlightened One 西方大通衆慧如來正覺 ...<sup>156</sup>

In Chapter XXI of Dharmarakṣa’s translation (T 263) and in Chapter XXIII of Kumārajīva’s translation (T 262) (the chapter on Bodhisattva Bhaiṣajyarāja) Amitāyus as well as the pure land of Sukhāvati are mentioned in relation to women: “...If there is any woman five hundred years after the parinirvāṇa of the Tathāgata who hears this Sutra and practices according to the teaching, she will immediately reach the dwelling of the Buddha Amitāyus in the Sukhāvati World, surrounded by great bodhisattvas, and will be born on a jeweled seat in a lotus flower...” (quoted from the Kumārajīva translation).<sup>157</sup> Here the pertinent Chinese characters in each translation of the same passage are:

Dharmarakṣa’s translation: ... 生安養國, 見無量壽佛 ...<sup>158</sup>

Kumārajīva’s translation : ... 往安樂世界阿彌陀佛 ...<sup>159</sup>

Dharmarakṣa uses “Wu-liang shou fo” 無量壽佛 for the Buddha’s name, and “An-yang kuo” 安養國 (Land of Peaceful Nourishment or Land of Peace and Nourishment) for Sukhāvati. Kumārajīva uses “A-mi-t’o fo” 阿彌陀佛 for the Buddha’s name, and “An-lo shih-ka’i 安樂世界” (Realm of Peaceful Bliss or Realm of Peace and Bliss) for Sukhāvati.

With regard to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, to whom a whole chapter is devoted in both translations:

<sup>154</sup> T. Kubo and A. Yuyama, *The Lotus Sutra*, translated from the Chinese of Kumārajīva, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 140-141.

<sup>155</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), p. 25c.

<sup>156</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), p. 90a.

<sup>157</sup> Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 300.

<sup>158</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), p. 126c.

<sup>159</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T262), p. 54c.

Dharmarakṣa translation (Chapters I and XXIII) uses: 光世音菩薩<sup>160</sup>

Kumārajīva's translation (Preface and Chapter XXV) uses: 觀世音菩薩<sup>161</sup>

With regard to the characters for Mahāsthāmaprāpta:

Dharmarakṣa translation (Chapter I) uses: Ta-shih-chih p'u-sa 大勢至菩薩<sup>162</sup>

Kumārajīva's translation (Preface and Chapter XX) uses: Te-ta-shih p'u-sa 得大勢菩薩<sup>163</sup>

There is considerable difference in the Chinese character usage for the terms cited above. It is important to note that the characters Wu-liang-shou fo 無量壽佛 are used by Dharmarakṣa. This is the earliest clear usage of this name for Amitāyus (different, for example from "Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching" 無量清淨 used in the *P'ing-teng-chüeh ching* [item 2.b above]), and is the same as used in the Group 6 colophon (but not used by Kumārajīva). However, the same is not the case for the name of Avalokiteśvara: the Cave 169 Group 6 colophon does not agree with Dharmarakṣa's term for this Bodhisattva (but it does agree with the Kumārajīva term). For Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Dharmarakṣa uses the same characters used by Chih-ch'ien in the *Wei-mo chieh ching*, but Kumārajīva uses the characters "Te-ta-shih p'u-sa", which has the addition of "Te 得" and lacks the "chih 至". With regard to the name of Sukhāvati, Dharmarakṣa's "An-yang" 安養 was widely used prior to the translations by Kumārajīva, but was seldom used after Kumārajīva's term(s) for Sukhāvati (as "An-lo" 安樂 or "Ch'i-lo" 極樂, the latter introduced in the (Smaller) *Sukhāvativyūha*—see item 12 below and Appendix II) became more prevalent in translations.

Even though the *Lotus Sutra* is not a text devoted to Amitābha/Amitāyus, it no doubt served to greatly enhance the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who is presented in this sutra (with a complete chapter) as a great individual Bodhisattva of saving powers. This chapter does not, however, specifically mention the relation of Avalokiteśvara with Amitābha/Amitāyus and Sukhāvati. Nevertheless, this popular and influential sutra served to heighten the awareness and importance of Avalokiteśvara, which, in conjunction with the clearly stated importance of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta as the two great Bodhisattvas and successors of Amitābha/Amitāyus in the Buddha-land of Sukhāvati in the western direction as presented in the two early translations of the *Sukhāvativyūha*, must have deepened the concepts and imagery in the minds of the Chinese concerning this Buddha and his two great Bodhisattvas (especially Avalokiteśvara) and his Buddha-land Sukhāvati, which is at least mentioned in the *Lotus Sutra*. The two translations of the *Sukhāvativyūha* combined with the Chapter XXIII of the *Lotus Sutra* (Dharmarakṣa's translation) probably stimulated the imagination and faith of the believers on a closely personal level and strengthened the interest in Amitābha/Amitāyus and his Buddha-land. This seems to have been especially the case in South China under the Eastern Chin in the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century, as far as we can discern from the records.

<sup>160</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), pp. 63a (Chapter I) and 128c-129c (Chapter XXIII).

<sup>161</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), pp. 2a (Preface) and 56c-58b (Chapter XXV).

<sup>162</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), p. 63a. In Chapter 19, p. 122b-c, the characters "Te-ta-shih p'u-sa 德大勢菩薩" appear, but it is not clear if this refers to Mahāsthāmaprāpta (more than likely they do, since it is clearly Mahāsthāmaprāpta in Kumārajīva's translation of this passage) or may be a different Bodhisattva. These characters do not appear to be used thereafter for Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

<sup>163</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), pp. 2a and 50b-c.

6) *Brahmaviśeṣacintīparipṛcchā Sūtra* (Questions of Brahmā Sutra)

a) *Ch'ih hsin fan-t'ien so wen ching* 持心梵天所問經 in 4 chüan, translated by Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 (Dharmarakṣa), 286 A.D. In *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 585), pp. 1a-33a. Korean Catalogue (K 142).

Though this is not a sutra that speaks of Amitābha/Amitāyus or Sukhāvati, both Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattvas are part of the dialogue in answering Brahmā's questions in chüan 2 of Chu Fa-hu's translation. Here Chu Fa-hu uses the same characters that appear in his translation of the *Lotus Sutra* for Avalokiteśvara, namely, Kuang-shih-yin p'u-sa 光世音菩薩. However, while in the *Lotus Sutra* Chu Fa-hu used the same characters for Mahāsthāmaprāpta as were used by Chih-ch'ien 支謙 in his translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (see above 4.a), namely, Ta-shih-chih p'u-sa 大勢至菩薩,<sup>164</sup> in the *Ch'ih hsin fan-t'ien so wen ching* (Question of Brahmā Sutra, T 585), published the same year as the *Lotus Sutra*, Chu Fa-hu used the characters "Te-ta-shih p'u-sa 得大勢菩薩".<sup>165</sup> This is important in the context of our study of the Cave 169 Group 6 colophon inscriptions, because it becomes clear that Chu Fa-hu was the first translator to add the character "Te 得" in translating the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta, which is written as 得大勢至菩薩 in the Group 6 colophon.

b) *Ssu i fan t'ien so wen ching* 思益梵天所問經, 4 chüan, translated by Kumārajīva, 402 A.D., in Ch'ang-an. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 586), pp. 33a-62a. Korean Catalogue (K 143).

Like the above translation, this sutra does not explain Amitābha/Amitāyus or Sukhāvati, but it does have the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta among the questioning Bodhisattvas. Here Kumārajīva uses the characters Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa 觀世音菩薩 and Te-ta-shih p'u-sa 得大勢菩薩.<sup>166</sup> The characters for Mahāsthāmaprāpta follow those used by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) in his translation of this sutra in ca. 286 A.D. The Cave 169 Group 6 niche colophons for these two Bodhisattvas agrees with Kumārajīva's usage, except that the Group 6 colophon for Mahāsthāmaprāpta includes the character "chih 至" in the name: 得大勢至菩薩.

7) *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* (*Hsien-chieh ching* 賢劫經), 8 chüan, translated by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu 竺法護), 291 or 300 A.D. under the Western Chin 西晉. In *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 425), pp. 1-65. Korean Catalogue (K 387).

This text has the following phrases:

- 1) Ta-shih-chih 大勢至<sup>167</sup>
- 2) hsi fang A-mi-t'ō fo 西方阿彌陀佛 (Amitābha Buddha of the Western Region)<sup>168</sup>
- 3) Ta mu A-mi-t'ō A-ch'u ju-lai 大目阿彌陀阿閼如來<sup>169</sup>
- 4) Wu-liang ch'ing-ching fo tu 無量清淨佛土<sup>170</sup>
- 5) Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching so ch'u fa tao hsin 無量清淨佛所初發道心<sup>171</sup>

<sup>164</sup> *Cheng fa-hua ching*, chüan 1 (Chapter 1), *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), p. 63a (and possibly in chüan 9, where the characters "Te-ta-shih p'u-sa 德大勢菩薩" appear, but it may be a different Bodhisattva and not refer to Mahāsthāmaprāpta).

<sup>165</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 585), p. 17b.

<sup>166</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 586), p. 48b-c (chüan 3).

<sup>167</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 425), verses, p. 47c.

<sup>168</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 425), p. 7b.

<sup>169</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 425), p. 64c.

<sup>170</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 425), p. 1c.

<sup>171</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 425), p. 60c.

It is not clear if “Ta-shih-chih” 大勢至 refers to the name of the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, but it does show usage of the combination of characters used by Dharmarakṣa, though in the *Ch’ih hsin fan t’ien so wen ching* (*Questions of Brahmā Sūtra*), he uses the characters “Te-ta-shih p’u-sa” 得大勢菩薩 (See 6.a and Appendix II). “Ta-mu A-mi-t’o A-ch’u-ju-lai” seems to be a list of three Tathāgatas: Ta-mu, Amitābha, and Akṣobhya. “Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching fo” 無量清淨佛 is probably Amitābha Buddha as used in the translations of Chih-ch’ien 支謙. Jan Nattier, in her study of the derivation of the phrase Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching as used by Chih-ch’ien in particular, discusses at length the various permutations of Indian terms in this case and their relation to translation into Chinese. She sees the possibility that “ch’ing-ching” 清淨 refers to the term *vyūha* (“array”) that other terms such as *śubha* (“auspicious”) and (*vi*)*śuddha* (“pure”) could have been considered as synonyms.<sup>172</sup> In the case of Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra*, she notes that he appears to have adopted Chih-ch’ien’s terminology, though she is cautious to be determinative that it is indeed referring to Amitābha/Amitāyus because of lack of clear comparative passages in other versions of this sūtra.<sup>173</sup> Like Chih-ch’ien, Dharmarakṣa seems also to have used A-mi-t’o fo and Wu-liang-ch’ing-ching fo simultaneously in the same text (see Appendix II).

b. *Eulogies, Images, and Biographies from the South during the Eastern Chin (317-420)*

Translations of sūtras into Chinese during the 4<sup>th</sup> century are less prolific with respect to the subject of Amitābha/Amitāyus than in the preceding early period. However, there are a few records that supply an indication of the growing interest in Amitābha/Amitāyus. Those that come to my attention are the following, which include a eulogy and image from early in the Eastern Chin, and excerpts from biographies, particularly concerning Hui-yüan (334-416) and his disciples on Lu shan, who were devotees of Amitābha/Amitāyus. There is also a relatively extensive literature of “miracle stories” regarding belief in Avalokiteśvara as savior from calamities, especially as based on Chapter XXIII of Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Chapter XXIII became widely popular as a separate sūtra called *Kuang-shih-yin p’u-men p’in* 光世音普門品 (*All-Pervading Gateway of the One Who Gives Light to the Sounds of the World*).<sup>174</sup> The following are some examples that reveal the growing interest in Amitābha/Amitāyus.

8) *Eulogy (tsan 讚) on Amitābha by Chih-tun 支遁*

Chih-tun 支遁 (314-366), also known as Chih Tao-lin 支道林, was an active and influential leader and scholar-monk in the Buddhist community of K’uai-chi 會稽 and Chien-k’ang 建康 in the early Eastern Chin.<sup>175</sup> He had fled to the south with his aristocratic family (which had been Buddhist “for generations”) to escape the troubles in the North at the end of the Western Chin (285-317).<sup>176</sup> He studied Buddhism “in the tradition of Lokakṣema, which had circulated south of the Yangtzu in the previous generation” and had “generated insights into the Aṣṭas.p.p. (*Aṣṭasārikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*) and the *Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhisūtra* translated in the kingdom of Wu by Chih-ch’ien under the title

<sup>172</sup> “...the term *vyūha*, in the very common expression *kṣetra-vyūha* “[buddha-]field array” could have been understood in a Middle Indic dialect as a reference to the purified quality (\**viśūha*, interpreted as a form of *viśuddha* “pure”) of a buddha-field...” Nattier (2007a) I, p. 391. For a full explanation of this fascinating study, see *Ibid.*, pp. 370-386.

<sup>173</sup> Nattier (2007a), I, p. 385.

<sup>174</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), pp. 128c-129c; Tsukamoto (1985), p. 223.

<sup>175</sup> “...the greatest propagator of Buddhism among the gentry at the Southern capital...” Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 8.

<sup>176</sup> Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 116.



*Hui yin ching* 慧印經. He became a favorite monk of the gentry families of the South (Eastern Chin) at the time when they were exercising their most powerful influence on the state.”<sup>177</sup>

According to a eulogy that Chih-tun composed to Amitābha Buddha, *A-mi-t'o-fo hsiang tsan* (ping hsü) 彌陀佛像讚 (并序), which is preserved in the *Kuang hung-ming chi* 廣弘明集 (T'ang), chüan 15,<sup>178</sup> Chih-tun had a painting made of Amitābha and worshipped it.<sup>179</sup> In the last passage of this eulogy he states: “... Hence I had a painting made by an artisan, and erected this as a manifestation of the divine (power); respectfully I look up to the noble appearance (of this Buddha) in order to confront myself with Him whom (I adore like) Heaven.”<sup>180</sup> As discussed in Vol. II of this series, this appears to be the earliest known painting of Amitābha/Amitāyus known in the records in China. In this writing Chih-tun mentions the name of the “Scripture of Amitābha” (*A-mi-t'o ching*), which is likely to be the (Larger) *Sukhāvativyūha* (T 362) translated by Lokakṣema (see discussion above in 2.a),<sup>181</sup> and makes the following in reference to Sukhāvati and to the names of the Buddha of Sukhāvati:

- i. ... 西方有國，國名安養...<sup>182</sup> Chih-tun names Sukhāvati by saying that the “Western Region has a realm (kuo); that realm is named An-yang (Peaceful Nourishment).”<sup>183</sup> These are the same characters for the land of Amitāyus as used by Dharmarakṣa in his translation of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Cheng fa-hua ching*),<sup>184</sup> (see Appendix II), who seems to have been the first to use these characters for Sukhāvati.
- ii. ... 其佛號阿彌陀，晉言無量壽... it's [i.e., Sukhāvati's] Buddha is called A-mi-t'o. Chin calls [this Buddha] Wu-liang shou...<sup>185</sup> Here Chih-tun indicates both names of the Buddha: Amitābha (A-mi-t'o) and Amitāyus (Wu-liang shou), so both appear to be common usage by the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in the South. It is, however, interesting to note that Chih-tun indicates that in Chin (i.e., Eastern Chin) this Buddha is called “Wu-liang shou”, also apparently first used by Dharmarakṣa in the *Lotus Sutra*. From Chih-tun's statement it appears that in the South (Eastern Chin), the aspect of Infinite Life seems to be most popular in designating this Buddha.

### 9) Biography of Chu Fa-k'uang

Chu Fa-k'uang 竺法曠 (327-402), a specialist on both the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Sukhāvativyūha* (he always recited these two, presumably the latter in one of the early Sukhāvati texts). The biography of Chu Fa-k'uang from the Kao-seng chuan is translated in full here:

His surname is I 睪 and he was a Hsia-p'ei 下邳 person (northern Kiang-su province). He lived in Wu-hsing 吳興 (Chekiang province). He lost both parents when he was young and it is said that he filially served his step-mother. The family was poor and without assets. In order to furnish the food, he always cultivated the rice fields. When his step-mother died, he performed the funeral with extreme etiquette (li). After mourning, he became a monk and served the monk Chu T'an-yin 竺曇印 as his master. [Chu T'an]-yin was brilliant and talented and accomplished in religious practice (Tao-hsing

<sup>177</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p. 339.

<sup>178</sup> *Kuang hung-ming chi* (T'ang), chüan 15, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 52, (T 2103), pp. 196b-197a.

<sup>179</sup> Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 128. Also see discussion of this painting in Rhie (2002), p. 57.

<sup>180</sup> Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 128.

<sup>181</sup> This would seem to indicate that the *Wu-liang-shou ching* version had not yet been translated.

<sup>182</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 52, p. 196b.

<sup>183</sup> Also see Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 116.

<sup>184</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, p. 126c.

<sup>185</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 52, p. 196b.



道行). [Fa-] k'uang attended his teacher with sincere devotion, and he came to receive the complete precepts. [He] settled the winds (emotions?), established restraint, and was eminently different from others. In conduct he was simple and easy in work, and he was determined in [his] practice for the profound.

[Chu T'an-] yin once got severely sick. [Fa-] k'uang then for seven days and seven nights sincerely prayed and [performed] the ritual of repentance. When it came to the 7<sup>th</sup> day, suddenly a five-colored light appeared shining at [Chu T'an-] yin's door, and he felt like there was someone caressing him by hand. Subsequently he was cured from the suffering. Later [Fa-k'uang] bade farewell to his master and travelled far away, widely searching for the essential sutras. He returned and stayed in a stone cave-room (shih shih 石室) at Ch'ien-ch'ing shan 潛青山. All the time [he considered] that the *Fa-hua* 法華 (*Lotus Sutra*) had the meaning of unifying the three (vehicles), and that the *Wu-liang-shou* 無量壽 (*Sukhāvativyūha*) was the root of the pure land (ch'ing-t'u chih yin 淨土之因). He always intoned and chanted these two texts. [Whenever there] was an assembly [of monks], then he lectured [on them]; [when he] was alone, then he chanted [them].

When Hsieh An 謝安<sup>186</sup> was the Wu-hsing 吳興[守] (governor), he went to pay his respects [to Fa-k'uang], but the mountain sojourn [where Fa-k'uang stayed] was impenetrable and the carriage could not pass through. Thereupon [Hsieh] abandoned the carriage and walked along the top of the mountain.

Emperor Chien-wen 簡文 (r. 371-372) of [Eastern] Chin 晉 sent the governor (t'ai-shou 太守) of T'ang-i 堂邑, Chü An-yüan 曲安遠, to ask about [Fa-k'uang's] well-being, and also to consult with him about Yao-hsing 妖星 (the "strange star"),<sup>187</sup> requesting [Fa-] k'uang's power [to do what he could]. Fa-] k'uang responded saying, "Sung Ching 宋景 cultivated his blessings and was able to move the order of Yao-sheng. Since you, Emperor, are governing, the policy and laws are completely set. The world is an important task and numerous affairs are sorrowful. A slight error at the beginning will lead 1,000 *li* astray. One must diligently cultivate virtuous governing and thus stop the heavenly reprimand. I, humble one, necessarily must exhaust sincerity to respond to you. Indeed, I am afraid I have the intention, but no power." Then with his disciples he went into purification and repentance ritual. Soon calamity destroyed [the emperor].

During the Hsing-ning 興寧 period (363-365) of [Eastern] Chin, Fa-k'uang had travelled east to Yü-hsüeh 禹穴 looking at the landscape (mountains and water). He went to Ku-t'an 孤潭 in Jo-yeh (shan) 若耶,<sup>188</sup> wishing to nourish his mind by the cliffs along the mountain. Hsi Ch'ao 郗超 and Hsieh Ch'ing-hsü 謝慶緒 [among his followers] both lived outside the dusty world.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>186</sup> Hsieh An (320-385) became a powerful minister of the Eastern Chin government, especially under the regency of Lady Ch'u (until 376).

<sup>187</sup> According to Zürcher, Chü An-yüan was sent to consult with Fa-k'uang "about the means to eliminate the baleful influence of an 'evil star.' This phenomenon had occurred on February 18, when 'Mars receded into the constellation T'ai-wei.' The ominous portent had made a great impression on the emperor, to whom it was an obvious sign of approaching usurpation of the imperial throne by Huan Wen, then at the height of his power. He discussed its meaning with Hsi Ch'ao, and it may have been this fervent Buddhist who persuaded the emperor to consult Fa-k'uang." Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 150.

<sup>188</sup> Jo-yeh shan (south of Shao-hsing, in Chekiang province) in the region of K'uai-chi, the domain of the wealthy and powerful aristocrats of the time, many of them Buddhists interested in the "pure talk" and "dark learning" fashionable in these circles. "At Jo-yeh shan he conversed with some of Chih Tun's lay followers, notably Hsi Ch'ao and Hsieh Fu." Hsi Ch'ao was a lay follower of the scholar monk Chih-tun. Zürcher (1959 and 2007), pp. 127, 144-145.

<sup>189</sup> Both Hsi Ch'ao and Hsieh Ch'ing-hsü were important members of the aristocratic class who were devout lay Buddhist followers, clearly in Fa-k'uang's circle. "Hsieh An was one of his converts, while Hsi ch'ao and Hsieh Ch'ing-

At that time in the eastern land there was much pestilence and disease. When he was young, [Fa-k'uang] had practiced kindness and compassion as well as skillful spiritual incantations. Consequently, he went from village to village saving those in danger and with urgency. After leaving the villages he stayed at the Ch'ang-yüan ssu 昌原寺. For the common people (the "hundred surnames") who were sick, many who prayed with him attained the expected result. Some who could see ghosts (spirits) said that when going about, [Fa-k'uang] was always guarded front and back by several tens of spirits.

Around that time, the monk Chu Tao-lin 竺道隣 made a Wu-liang-shou image 造無量壽像 (Amitāyus) [for Fa-k'uang].<sup>190</sup> [Fa-] k'uang then, leading those who had causal connection [with him], erected a great hall (大殿 ta-tien) [for it]. It was said that felling trees would cause drought, so [Fa-] k'uang made incantations to bring water. [Eastern] Chin's emperor Hsiao-wu ti 孝武帝 (r. 372-396) respectfully received what was said about [Fa-k'uang's] important [acts] and invited him to the capital and served him with a master's etiquette. [Fa-k'uang] stayed at the Ch'ang-kan ssu 長干寺. In Yüan-hsing 元興 1<sup>st</sup> year (402) he died at age 76. The San-chi ch'ang-shih 散騎常侍, Ku K'ai-chih 顧愷之, wrote a praising eulogy biography, it has been said.<sup>191</sup>

#### 10) Images by Tai K'uei

The wooden image made by the renowned artist Tai K'uei 戴逵 (d. ca. 393 or 396) of the Eastern Chin was famous in its day (late 4<sup>th</sup> century). It was at the Ling-pao ssu 靈寶寺 on the north side of K'uai-chi 會稽 shan in Chekiang near where Tai K'uei was living. He made it then, but not being satisfied, he recut it later. It was said to be "an extremely wonderful image".<sup>192</sup> The mid-9<sup>th</sup> century text *Li-tai ming-hua chi* 歷代名畫記 records this image as an Amitāyus, 16 feet tall and still existing in the T'ang dynasty.<sup>193</sup>

#### 11) Biographical excerpts of Hui-yüan 慧遠, Seng-chi 僧濟 and other monks at Lu shan 廬山

a) In Hui-yüan's 慧遠 (334-416) biography in the *Kao-seng chuan*<sup>194</sup> appears the account of the famous gathering of 123 persons on September, 402 A.D. at Hui-yüan's monastery, the Tung-lin ssu 東林寺, on Mt. Lu and their vow taken in front of the statue of Amitābha/Amitāyus to be reborn in Sukhāvati, here called the Western Direction or Region (Hsi-fang 西方), the same term as used in Chih-tun's eulogy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>195</sup>

... Finally, gentlemen who (desired to) observe the Rules and to appease their minds, guests who (wanted to) reject the worldly dust and to live in pure faith, all unexpectedly arrived and longingly gathered from afar... [Here the names of 12 gentlemen from different areas are listed]...and others. They all abandoned the world

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hsü engaged with him in (metaphysical discussion and other such) sophisticated pursuits (ch'iang yu kuei hsiang)." Tsukamoto (1985), p. 222.

<sup>190</sup> Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 145 calls this Chu Tao-lin (not to be confused with the famous scholar-monk Chih Tao-lin) a "clerical artisan".

<sup>191</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 5, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), pp. 356c-357a. Also see Tsukamoto (1985), p. 589 for partial translation of this biography by Leon Hurvitz; and Zürcher (1959), pp. 144-145, 150.

<sup>192</sup> See *Chi shen-chou san-pao kan t'ung lu* by Tao-hsüan (T'ang), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 52, p. 416c. Translated in Rhie (2002), p. 96.

<sup>193</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 96.

<sup>194</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, pp. 357c-361b.

<sup>195</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 6, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 358c. Also see translation in Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 244.

and gave up its splendor, and came to live under Hui-yüan's guidance. Then, before a statue of Amitābha [Amitāyus in the text] in the *vihāra*, Hui-yüan (and these lay devotees) held a fasting (ceremony) and made the vow together to strive for (rebirth in) the Western Region (*Sukhāvātī*). 遠乃於精舍無量壽像前, 建齋立誓, 共期西方. He ordered Liu I-min to compose the text of this (formulary), which ran as follows: "In the year corresponding with the constellation She-t'i, in the autumn, in the seventh month the first day of which has (the cyclical signs) wu-ch'en, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day with (the cyclical signs) *i-wei* (i.e., September 11, 402 A.D.). The Master of the Doctrine, Shih Hui-yüan, (urged by) the depth of his noble emotions and the excellence of his pure feelings, has invited (us), like-minded gentlemen, (desirous of) appeasing the mind and inspired by a noble faith, to the number of 123 men, to assemble before the statue of Amitābha at the *vihāra* of the *Prajñā* terrace on the northern slope of the Lu Shan 百有二十三人集於廬山之陰般若雲臺精舍阿彌陀像前, and he has led us reverently to perform the sacrifice of incense and flowers, and to make a vow in order to stimulate all those who take part in this meeting ...<sup>196</sup>

This documented event, including the list of 12 of the names of the prominent persons, is notable and may well have served as a model for other events, even including the dedication of images, such as the Group 6 niche at Ping-ling ssu where a group of prominent persons are specifically portrayed in paintings that are labeled with colophons.

Hui-yüan was known to have been a strong proponent of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, where Amitāyus is the only Buddha named in the sutra, which is focused on Buddha "recollection" (Buddhānusmṛtisamādhi) and learning directly from the Buddha in visualization.<sup>197</sup> The Amitāyus image at Hui-yüan's monastery may have been a single Buddha, and may have been in the teaching mudrā, which could be appropriate for the Amitāyus of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*; see item no. 1 in section II.A.2.a. above.<sup>198</sup>

b) Seng-chi 僧濟 was a disciple of Hui-yüan. He arrived on Mt. Lu during the T'ai-yüan 晉太元中 period (376-397). His biography in the *Kao-seng chuan* recounts his experiences before his death at age 45 and his faith in rebirth in Sukhāvātī. This biography uses the term An-yang 安養 for Sukhāvātī, the same as in Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Lotus Sutra* and as in Chih-tun's eulogy noted above in 11a, and also, like that eulogy, uses the term Western Realm (Hsi-kuo 西國), though in a slightly different way. The Buddha is called both Mi-t'o 彌陀 and Wu-liang-shou fo 無量壽佛.<sup>199</sup> Interestingly, the name of *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經 is also mentioned. Hui-yüan had his monks intone this text for Seng-chi during his final illness: "...又請衆僧夜集爲轉無量壽經..."<sup>200</sup> I have not noticed this fact mentioned in other studies of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, but it could be one indication that the sutra by that title was in existence in the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

c) Hui-yung 慧永, when he left the Hsi-lin ssu 西林寺 on Mt. Lu, prayed to be reborn in the Western Region (hsi-fang 西方), the same term used in Hui-yüan's biography (see above section II.A.2.b. no. 11b). He died in 410 A.D. at age 84.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Zürcher (1959 and 1970), p. 244; characters added from biography of Hui-yüan, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 358c.

<sup>197</sup> See Tsukamoto (1985), pp. 857-858.

<sup>198</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 137.

<sup>199</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 6, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 362b. Also see Zürcher (1959 and 2007), pp. 221-222.

<sup>200</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, p. 362b.

<sup>201</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 6, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 362a-b. Tsukamoto (1985), p. 858.

d) Hui-ch'ih 慧持 (337-412), Hui-yüan's younger brother,<sup>202</sup> left Mt. Lu in 399 to go to Szechwan. When leaving he voiced his aspirations for the "Western Region" (Hsi-fang 西方), the term also used in the biographies of Hui-yüan and Hui-yung, suggesting that it may have been the one in current usage in that region around the late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>203</sup>

It is surprising, if the *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經 had been translated by that time (as seems to have been indicated in the biography of Seng-chi quoted above), that the terminology for Sukhāvati used in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* does not appear in the biographies of the monks Hui-yüan, Hui-yung and Hui-ch'ih, all of whom were devotees of Amitāyus and wished to be reborn in Sukhāvati. Perhaps the tradition of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* was dominant in the circles around Lu shan. However, the one intriguing mention in the biography of Seng-chi that Hui-yüan had the *Wu-liang-shou ching* intoned by the assembly of monks to Seng-chi when he was near death could suggest that the *Wu-liang-shou ching* recension was translated by the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Although it is possible that the author of the biography, living at a later time (ca. 515), used the by then newer translation and more popular *Wu-liang-shou ching* title rather than the titles of any of the older translations. There is no mention of the Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvati in any of these biographies.

c. *Period ca. 400-425 A.D. in North and South China*

Translations by Kumārajīva, working in Ch'ang-an during the reign of Yao Hsing (r. 393-416) of the Later Ch'in (386-418) from ca. 402 until his death (ca. 409, 410, 411 or 413), set a standard for sutra translations in China, so that texts are often described as being translated either before or after Kumārajīva. Several of Kumārajīva's translations contain terminology regarding Amitābha/Amitāyus (the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍrika* have already been noted as nos. 4)b) and 5)b) above). Others include the following.

12) *Fo-shuo A-mi-t'o ching* 佛說阿彌陀經, (commonly called the Smaller [or Shorter] *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* as distinct from the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* in 2 chüan), 1 chüan, translated in 402 by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 366), pp. 346b-348a. The *Ch'u-shan tsang chi chi* reports another recension translated by Guṇabhadra (394-468), but it was lost, probably by the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>204</sup>

In this translation, Kumārajīva generally uses throughout the characters A-mi-t'o 阿彌陀 for the Buddha Amitābha/Amitāyus and Chi-lo kuo-t'u 極樂國土 (Land of Utmost Bliss) for Sukhāvati. However, when speaking of the Buddhas of the four cardinal directions, the Buddha of the Western Region is called Wu-liang shou fo 無量壽佛. This text, unlike the (Larger) *Sukhāvativyūha*, does not mention the two great Bodhisattvas, but it does make special note of the Buddhas of the of the four cardinal directions, zenith and nadir. Their names and directions are given as follows:<sup>205</sup>

East direction also has A-ch'u-pi fo 東方亦有阿閼鞞佛 (Akṣobhya Buddha)

South direction world has Ming-teng Buddha called Wen-kuang fo 南方世界有明燈佛名聞光佛

West direction world has Wu-liang shou fo 西方世界有無量壽佛

North direction world has Yen-chien fo 北方世界有焰肩佛

<sup>202</sup> Who, according to Zürcher, "excelled in historical studies and literary composition." Zürcher (1959 and 2007), p. 8.

<sup>203</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, 6, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 361c (biography pp.361b-362a).

<sup>204</sup> K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine*, Albany, N.Y., 1990, p. 16.

<sup>205</sup> *Fo-shuo A-mi-t'o ching*, *Daizōkyō*, 12, (T 366), p. 347b-c.

Nadir direction world has Shih-tzu fo 下方世界有師子佛  
 Zenith direction world has Fan-yin fo 上方世界有梵音佛

Many scholars consider that this text was originally composed earlier than the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha*. It certainly is much simpler and it uses such features as the Buddhas of the four cardinal directions, zenith and nadir rather than the more elaborate Buddhas of the ten-directions or of the eight directions plus zenith and nadir, which seem to be a more satisfactory classification of the cosmic directions that appears with frequency in the more evolved texts. It is somewhat surprising that Kumārajīva did not do a re-translation of the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha*. He was perhaps most interested in translating the more recent texts and in texts of the Mādhyamika, such as the great treatise *Ta chih-tu lun*.

13) *Ta chih-tu lun* 大智度論 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*), 100 chüan, translated by Kumārajīva, 402-406 in Ch'ang-an. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 25, (T 1509), pp. 57c-756c. Korean Catalogue (K 549).

Except for “Mi-t’o fo” 彌陀佛 (Amitābha) in a few cases,<sup>206</sup> the *Ta-chih-tu lun* does not specifically mention Sukhāvati or the two great Bodhisattvas.

14) *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經, 10 chüan, probably translated by Buddhahadra, 420-423 of [Liu] Sung (or possibly a little earlier, ca. 412-423)<sup>207</sup> in Yang chou 陽州. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 643), pp. 645c-697a. Korean Catalogue (K 401). Also refer to the biography of Buddhahadra translated below in Chapter 7.

This sutra is one of the earliest of the “Kuan” (visualization) texts to be translated into Chinese (several were done earlier by Kumārajīva). It is longer than most and it clearly became a model for those to follow.

In chüan 9, the Buddhas of the four directions are named along with the names of their realm (kuo 國) as the basic samādhi. They are (*italics added*):

... *Eastern* direction has a realm (kuo) 東方有國, the realm is called Miao-hsi 國名妙喜. The Buddha of that land (t’u) is called A-ch’u (Akṣobhya) 彼土佛號曰阿閼. This is the place of the number one bhikṣus (i.e., the highest monks) 即第一比丘是. *Southern* direction 南方有國 has a realm. The realm’s name is called Huan-hsi 國名曰歡喜. The Buddha is called Pao-hsiang 佛號寶相. This is the place of the second [rank] bhikṣus 即第二比丘是. *Western* direction has a realm 西方有國. The realm’s name is Ch’i-lo 國名極樂. The Buddha is called Wu-liang-shou 佛號無量壽. This is the place of the third [rank] bhikṣus 第三比丘是. *Northern* direction 北方有國 has a realm. The realm’s name is Lien-hua chuang-yen 國名蓮華莊嚴. The Buddha is called Miao-sheng 佛號妙聲. This is the place of the fourth [rank] bhikṣus 即第四比丘是 ...<sup>208</sup>

This passage citing Wu-liang shou 無量壽 (Amitāyus) and his Buddha-land (Buddhākṣetra) in the West called Ch’i-lo 極樂 is important for confirming the usage of these characters for the period ca. 412-420/423. Ch’i-lo was used first by Kumārajīva in his 402 translation of the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha*, but Dharmarakṣa and Chih-tun’s eulogy used the characters Wu-liang shou 無量壽 earlier. Buddhahadra used one term with a strong tradition in Eastern Chin in the South and one which was newly coined by Kumārajīva. It is interesting to see the choice of Wu-liang-shou Buddha rather than

<sup>206</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 25, (T 1509), p. 79a.

<sup>207</sup> Tsukamoto suggests he may have begun the translation at Lu shan, which he left in ca. 412. For a brief summation of Yamabe’s views regarding the translation, see Chapter 4, note 45.

<sup>208</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T643), p. 689a.



Kumārajīva's A-mi-t'ō fo; this could indicate some deference on Buddhahadra's part to a southern preference for Wu-liang-shou fo over A-mi-t'ō fo, a factor which could also support a Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün translation for the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, as discussed in no. 2.c above. The *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* translation provides some evidence for the usage of terminology ca. 412 or 416 to ca. 420 or 423. There is, however, no mention of the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvati in this sutra.

15) *Ta-fang kuang fo hua-yen ching* 大方廣佛華嚴經 ([*Buddha*] *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, commonly called the *Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經), 60 chüan. Translated by Buddhahadra (from a text obtained by Chih Fa-ling 支法領 in Khotan) beginning on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 14<sup>th</sup> year of I-hsi 義熙 of the Eastern Chin (April 30, 418 A.D.), and finished on the 28<sup>th</sup> day, 12<sup>th</sup> month, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yung-ch'ü 永初, of [Liu] Sung (February 5, 422 A.D.) at the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺 in Yang chou 楊州.<sup>209</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), pp. 395a-788b. Korean Catalogue (K 79).

This is one of the great sutras of Buddhism and a major translation of this time in the South. It is documented according to two records in the CSTCC and by the colophon at the end of the sutra.<sup>210</sup> Buddhahadra worked at the Tao-ch'ang ssu, a great monastery of Chien-k'ang with assistants and about 100 persons altogether helping with the translation and production.

The text of the *Hua-yen ching* seldom mentions Amitābha/Amitāyus. Wu-liang-shou fo is cited in chüan 45;<sup>211</sup> Kuan-shih-yin appears in chüan 51,<sup>212</sup> which is part of the Entering the Dharma World (Gandhavyūha) section. The term An-lo 安樂 appears occasionally, but not with respect to the Buddha-land of Sukhāvati, and the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta does not appear at all. For the question of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* being translated by Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün, see above under the *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* (section II.A.2.a., item no. 2)c) and the biography of Buddhahadra in the *Kao-seng chuan*, translated below in Chapter 7.

16) *Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa [Te-ta-shih p'u-sa] shou chi ching* 觀世音菩薩[得大勢菩薩]授記經 (*Sutra of Avalokiteśvara [and Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattvas] Receiving Prediction*), 1 chüan. Translated by T'an-wu-chieh 曇無竭 (Dharmodgata; Fa-yung 法勇), ca. 420 A.D. or a little later.<sup>213</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), pp. 353b-357c. Korean Catalogue (K 376).

An early translation of this sutra seems to have been made by Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 (Dharmarakṣa) during the Western Chin (385-317), but that text was lost (by the time of the Sui Dynasty 581-617). The pertinent statements in the sutra record books are as follows:

<sup>209</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 11c, lines 9-10. Korean Catalogue, (K79, p. 43).

<sup>210</sup> The record in the CSTCC in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55 (T 2145), p. 11c, which is translated in the heading above; a second record in *Ibid.*, pp. 60c-61a indicates that the translation was completed in I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year (420) and that the revision and collation was completed in Yung-ch'ü 2<sup>nd</sup> year (422). The colophon at the close of the *Hua-yen ching* in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 788b, cites the completion date as Yüan-hsi 元熙 2<sup>nd</sup> year (420). For complete translation of these three records, see Chapter 7, section I.A.1.a.iii. (See pp. 262-264).

<sup>211</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 693c.

<sup>212</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 718a-c.

<sup>213</sup> The date of 420 comes from the *Ta Chou kan-ting lu*, chüan 5, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2153), p. 399c, which says that the information comes from *Ch'ang fang lu* (597, Sui). There are also references to this sutra in *Li-tai-san-pao chi*, 10, the *K'ai-yüan shih chiao lu*, 2. *Bukkyō Daijiten*, p. 808c. The Korean Catalogue says: Yung-ch'ü 1<sup>st</sup> year of [Liu] Sung (420 A.D.) in Yang chou (i.e., Chien-k'ang).



i) “*Kuang-shih-yin Ta-shih-chih shou chüeh ching* 光世音大勢至受決經 one chüan 一卷.”<sup>214</sup>

ii) “*Kuan-shih-yin shou chüeh ching* 觀世音受決經: Chu Fa-hu 竺法護 put out 出 *Kuang shih-yin Ta-shih-chih shou chüeh ching* 光世音大勢至受決經 one chüan 一卷. T’an Wu-chieh 曇無竭 put out 出 *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* 觀世音受記經 1 chüan 一卷. [Concerning this one sutra] two persons differently put [it] out 一經二人異出.”<sup>215</sup>

iii) *Kuang-shih-yin Ta-shih-chih shou chüeh ching* 光世音大勢至受決經 one chüan 一卷; in Chin times Chu Fa-hu translated (it) 普世竺法護譯.”<sup>216</sup>

iv) “*Kuang-shih-yin Ta-shih-chih shou chüeh ching* 光世音大勢至受決經 one chüan 一卷; several times translated, lost original 重翻闕本; in Chin times Chu Fa-hu translated (it) 普世竺法護譯.”<sup>217</sup>

There was apparently another translation made during the Western Chin by Che Tao-chen 聶道真 entitled *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* 觀世音授記經, but it has not been transmitted.<sup>218</sup> This is interesting because the title uses the characters *Kuan-shih-yin* 觀世音 for Avalokiteśvara, characters which are usually ascribed to Kumārajīva for first usage. However, as noted by Jan Nattier, titles are not always indicative of the original translator’s usage, so the terms used in the titles would have to be confirmed by usage within the body of the text.

The translation by T’an-wu-chieh 曇無竭 and the lost one by Che Tao-chen 聶道真 are the only ones of these listed translations to use the phrase “shou-chi” 授記 for “prediction”. All the other titles use “shou-chüeh” 受決.

#### a) Biography of T’an-wu-chieh

The earliest extant text of this sutra is that translated by T’an-wu-chieh 曇無竭, who has a very interesting biography on several accounts. The biography relates his extraordinary journey to India with 25 companion monks, leaving in 420 A.D. and traveling through Ho-nan (Western Ch’in), Hai-chou, Turfan and Kashgar to Gandhāra, and later to Śravastī in Central India. The biography, which especially notes his inspiration from Fa-hsien’s 法顯 earlier trip (ca. 400-ca. 415), details the difficult passage into Gandhāra, and his attainment of the *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* during a more than one year stay at the Shih-liu ssu in Gandhāra, a monastery of 300 monks who, it is stated, studied a “combination of the Three Vehicles.” Here he received vows, studied with famous masters, learned foreign languages and read foreign books. During the tribulations of travel in India, T’an-wu-chieh’s deep reliance on the *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* becomes clear. His practice took the form of praise called in the biography as the “ch’eng-ming kuei-ming” 稱名歸命 (praising remembrance, probably similar to the well-known Japanese term “nembutsu”), and the text is attributed with saving the group from several harrowing experiences in India. He and five companions, the only ones of the original group of twenty-five to have survived the rigors of the long journey, returned together by the sea route to Kuang chou in southern China, probably several years after he left China (return date is not known).

<sup>214</sup> CTSCC, chüan 2, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T2145), p. 9a.

<sup>215</sup> CTSCC, chüan 2, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 14b.

<sup>216</sup> *Chung-ching mu-lu* 衆經目錄 (Sui, 594 A.D.) by Fa-ching 法經, et al, chüan 1, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2146), p. 117c, line 21.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, chüan 5, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55 (T 2147), p. 175c, line 18-19.

<sup>218</sup> This text was first noted in the *Li-tai-san-pao chi* (Sui), chüan 6.

He translated the *Kuan shih-yin shou chi ching* and it circulated in the capital (Ch'ien-kang, under the [Liu] Sung). Because of the relevance of this biography to the sutra of the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching* and to understanding the conditions in Gandhāra and Central India ca. 420 A.D., his biography from the *Kao-seng chuan* is translated here in full:

T'an-wu-chieh was also called Fa-yung 法勇. His surname was Li 李 and he was a Yu chou 幽州 (Hopei) person. When he was young he became a monk. Then he cultivated [himself] through earnest practice, upholding the vinaya precepts, and chanting sutras. He was considered to be important by [his] masters and by the monks. He heard that Fa-hsien 法顯 and others had personally walked to the country of Buddha (India). Inspired and forgetting the hardship (of the body), subsequently in Sung 宋 Yung-ch'u 永初 1<sup>st</sup> year (420 A.D.) he gathered some like-minded monks, including Seng Meng 僧猛 and T'an-lan 曇朗 and [his/their] followers (altogether) twenty-five persons. Together with offering banners and worshipping implements they started out from the northern land (probably North China) going far away to the Western Regions 西方. They first went to Ho-nan kuo 河南國 (i.e., the country of the Western Ch'in 西秦, see map in Fig. 1.1) and then they went to Hai-hsi chün 海西郡 (north of Chang-yeh in central Kansu; see map in Fig. 1.2). Further advancing, they entered the desert (of moving sands) and reached Kao-ch'ang chün 高昌郡. [They] passed through Ch'iu-tz'u 龜茲 (Kucha), Shu-lo 沙勒 (Kashgar) and various countries, climbed the Onion Range (Pamirs) and crossed the snowy mountains. The veil of vapor (mist) was in 1,000 layers, and the layers of ice [rose] 10,000 *li*. Below there was a great river flowing rapidly like an arrow. At the east and west side from two flanking mountains hanging ropes made a bridge. When the first person out of ten passed over to the other side, then [he made] rising smoke to show the signal [of success]. When the next person saw the smoke, then he crossed, and in that way they were able to advance. If no smoke was seen for a long time, then it was known that a strong wind blew the ropes and the person fell into the river. Continuing for three days and again crossed great snowy mountains. The hanging cliff was like a standing wall and there was no place to safely put the foot. The stone walls all had old holes, here and there alternating with each other. Each person, taking four poles, first pulled out the lower poles, then with hand holding the poles above, developed an alternating holding system. After [three] days of passing through, they then arrived at flat land. When they checked each other, twelve companions were lost. They moved on to Chi-pin 罽賓 country and worshipped the Buddha's begging bowl. They stayed there for more than one year, studying foreign books and foreign languages. [T'an-wu-chieh] searched for and obtained the *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* 觀世音受記經 in foreign writing (fan-wen 梵文), one pu (部). Continuing west, they arrived at the Indus River (Hsin-t'ou-na-t'i ho 辛頭那提河; Sindhunadi). The Chinese call it Shih-tzu k'ou 師子口 (Lion's Mouth River).<sup>219</sup> Following the River to the west, they entered Yüeh-chih country 月氏國. Here they worshipped the Buddha's uṣṇīṣa bone, and then saw the boat that crossed the boiling river. Later they arrived at the Shu-le ssu 石留寺 south of T'an-te shan 檀特山 (Tantaloka [Daṇḍaka] in Gandhāra). The three-hundred some monks living there combined the study of the three vehicles 雜三乘學 (Śrāvaka, Pratyeka Buddha and Bodhisattva).

<sup>219</sup> The *Kao-seng chuan* has the character yüeh 曰 (to speak) instead of k'ou 口 (mouth). However, Robert Shih suggests it was a printing error in the *Daizōkyō*. Shih (1968), p. 117, note 33. It does seem to be a more reasonable translation, especially since there are other rivers, such as several of the four great rivers emanating from Lake Anavatapta (north of the Himalayas) in the creation myth, with such descriptions as: the "Ganges out of a silver ox mouth," "the Indus out of that of an elephant". Soothill (1937), pp. 290-291. There are also other variations, one of which could have been for the Indus as "out of the mouth of a lion".

[T'an-]wu-chieh stayed in this temple and received the complete vows (Ta-chieh 大戒).<sup>220</sup> The Indian meditation master (ch'an shih) Bu [Fo]-t'o-to-lo 佛馱多羅, also called Chieh-chiu 覺求 [was there]. All the people of that region said that he had already attained the "fruit of the Way" (sheng-kuo 聖果).<sup>221</sup> [T'an-]wu-chieh requested him to be his Ho-shang 和上 (*upādhyāya*)<sup>222</sup> and the Chinese monk Chih-ting 志定 to be his A-ch'e li 阿闍梨 (*ācārya*). [T'an-wu-chieh and the companions] stayed there three months of the summer retreat (*varṣa*), then again they went towards central India. Since the roads of the region were a vacant desert, they were only offered rock honey for food. The companions were only thirteen persons, and eight died on the road. The remaining five went along together. Although [T'an-]wu-chieh frequently experienced dangerous and troublesome things, yet his mind was focused on the *Kuan-shih-yin ching*, which he had not even for a short time parted with, but nourished and guarded. When they were arriving at Sha-wei kuo 舍衛國 (*Śrāvastī*), in the field they met a herd of mountain elephants. [T'an-]wu-chieh praised the name (ch'eng ming kuei ming 稱名歸命) [of Kuan-shih-yin or the sutra].<sup>223</sup> Then a lion came out from the forest and the elephants were frightened and ran away. Later when they crossed the Heng ho 恒河 (Ganges River), [they] again met with a herd of wild buffalo who were bellowing and charging, desiring to kill the men. [Tan-]wu-chieh praised the name ("kuei ming") as before. Then soon there was a big vulture flying and coming. The wild buffalo were frightened and scattered. Consequently, they were able to avoid these [calamities]. His sincere mind had a supernatural connection and they were saved. Everything was like this. Later, in South India they took a boat and sailed over the sea reaching Kuang chou 廣州. His travelogue was separately recorded and transmitted, and he translated and put out the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching* 觀世音受記經, which is now transmitted in the capital (Chien-k'ang). Afterwards, we do not know what happened at the end [of his life].<sup>224</sup>

The descriptive details of the journey are of interest as throwing light on the wider Buddhist world of that time, ca. 420, a period that saw a number of Chinese monks traveling the hazardous and harrowing route to Gandhāra and beyond (see Chapter 1, sections B and D). It also confirms that the route through Bāmiyān and Afghanistan was not used at this time by the Chinese pilgrims as their passage into Gandhāra. He also used the route through the Western Ch'in territory to Hai-chou and then over the Northern Silk Road, apparently without the difficulties experienced by Fa-hsien. He and the others that survived that arduous portion of the journey saw the Buddha's uṣṇīṣa relic and the wooden boat that crossed the boiling water (the first time to see this mentioned).<sup>225</sup> It is also interesting to note his more than one year stay in Gandhāra, at the Shih-liu ssu monastery where there were 300 monks studying a combination of the Three Vehicles, an interesting commentary on the degree of integration of the Śrāvaka, Pratkeyabuddha and Bodhisattva vehicles, the former two of Hīnayāna and the latter of Mahāyāna. This is one important written evidence that in Gandhāra at this monastery monks of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna were together in the same monastery, a factor also noted frequently for the monasteries mentioned in the accounts of Fa-hsien. T'an-wu-chieh took the combined Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna vows at the Shih-liu ssu and studied with particular masters. He also studied foreign

<sup>220</sup> Both the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna vows, especially the latter. Soothill (1937), p. 89.

<sup>221</sup> Sheng-kuo is the "fruit of the saintly life," that is, bodhi or nirvāṇa. Soothill (1937), p. 410.

<sup>222</sup> A "sub-teacher", inferior to an ācārya. Soothill (1937), p. 253.

<sup>223</sup> "Kuei-ming means to invoke the name (namah or namo). Soothill (1937), p. 426. Shih (1968), p. 118 translates this as "invoking the name (of Avalokiteśvara) and taking refuge in him."

<sup>224</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 3, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, pp. 338b-339a. Also see Shih (1968), pp. 115-118.

<sup>225</sup> The uṣṇīṣa relic was known to be at Nagarahāra (Haḍḍa, Afghanistan). See Chapter 8 below.

languages and books and searched for and found the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching*, which seems to have been a particular goal of T'an-wu-chieh.

The latter part of the biography focuses on the relation of this text to T'an-wu-chieh: he is said to have kept it in mind constantly, and when in danger, he relied on the sutra and praised it as a *nembutsu* (ch'eng-ming kuei-ming), that is, relying on the spiritual power of the text. It then became clearly a personal salvation for him, and that may have been one reason for his translation, which it is said "circulated in the capital" (i.e., Chien-k'ang in the South). He followed in many ways the model set by Fa-hsien, but it is interesting to note that the text he relied on and translated was one devoted to Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih Bodhisattvas, the two Great Bodhisattvas of Amitābha's Buddha-land.

b) Summary Synopsis of the *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* (T 371) Translated by T'an-wu-chieh

This text is a significant part of the corpus of sutra literature regarding Amitābha, his Buddha-land and two Great Bodhisattvas. It was probably known in China since the Western Chin (from a translation by Chu Fa-hu and possibly one by Che Tao-chen, both lost). It was, however, newly translated by T'an-wu-chieh after he obtained a copy of the sutra in India, sometime around or a little later than 420. The T'an-wu-chieh translation, known as *Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa shou chi ching* [觀世音菩薩授記經 (*Sutra of Avalokiteśvara Receiving Prediction*) in one chüan (T 371), is said to have circulated in the capital of the [Liu] Sung. It becomes a pertinent and interesting text to consider in the developments of Amitābha belief in China in the period under discussion here. It appears to have been a somewhat popular text as it was translated several times [see above no. 16)]. As far as I know, this extant text by T'an-wu-chieh has not been translated into English, so a summary is provided here.

The narrative of the sutra begins with Śākyamuni Buddha at the Deer Park of the Immortals (Hsien-jen lu yüan 仙人鹿苑) at Vārāṇasī (Po-lo-nai 波羅奈) with a gathering of many thousands ("all Mahāyāna").<sup>226</sup> The Questioner is the Mahāsattva (ma-ho-sa 摩訶薩) Bodhisattva Hua-te-tsang p'u-sa 華德藏菩薩, who asks how to dispel doubt and prevent backsliding. One of the primary goals soon becomes apparent: it is the paramount importance of generating the mind of unexcelled perfect enlightenment—*anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi* (A-nou-to-lo san-mo san-p'u-t'i 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提) without reversal. The Buddha then teaches the *Ju-huan san-mei* 如幻三昧 (Illusion-like samādhi), with which one can attain three samādhis within this one and thus obtain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. When Hua-te-tsang p'u-sa asks which Bodhisattvas in this world have attained this samādhi, the Buddha answers, "In the western direction 西方, passing through countless worlds, there is a world named An-lo 有世界名安樂. This realm has a Buddha called Tathāgata Amitābha (A-mi-t'o ju-lai) 其國有佛號阿彌陀如來, with correct knowledge, now teaching the Dharma. There are two Bodhisattvas 彼有二菩薩, one called Kuan-shih-yin 一名觀世音 and the other called Te-ta-shih 二名得大勢 and they have obtained this samādhi. If Bodhisattvas who hear and receive this Dharma follow it for seven days and seven nights, then they will obtain this *Ju-huan samādhi*."<sup>227</sup>

When Hua-te-tsang p'u-sa requests Buddha by his supernatural powers to bring these two Great Bodhisattvas to this world for the sake of "good men and good women to develop the aspiration for supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*)", Buddha emits light from his ūṛṇā that shines throughout the three-thousand-world system and illuminates the An-lo Buddha-land, which,

<sup>226</sup> With a gathering of 20,000 great bhikṣus, 12,000 Bodhisattvas (including Mañjuśrī (Wen-shu shih-li p'u-sa 文殊師利菩薩) and Maitreya (Mi-lo-p'u-sa 彌勒菩薩) and 20,000 heavenly beings (t'ien-tzu 天子), all of the Mahāyāna (Ta-ch'eng 大乘). The Buddha had an entourage of countless 100,000. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), p. 353b.

<sup>227</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), pp. 353c-354a.

like all the other Buddha-lands, becomes golden color. All praised “Nan-wu Shih-chia ju-lai” (南無釋迦如來), all the beings saw the An-lo world of A-mi-t’o fo, and all praised “Nan-wu A-mi-t’o ju-lai of fulfilled, correct, complete knowledge.” At that time in the assembly 84,000 beings gave rise to the thought of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*) and wished to be born in that realm (of Amitābha). At that time the Bodhisattvas and Śrāvakas (Hearers) of the An-lo realm had not seen such a land (i.e., our world, the Sahā World) before and paid respect to Śākaymuni’s omniscient knowledge saying the words “Nan-wu Shih-chia-mou-ni fo 南無釋迦牟尼佛, able to teach like this to Bodhisattvas and Śrāvakas.” At that time the An-lo realm quaked and shook in six ways.

Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih Bodhisattvas ask Amitābha Buddha to explain the cause of these events, to which Amitābha Buddha responds that they occurred simultaneously in limitless various other Buddha lands and the beings there heard the name of Śākyamuni Buddha and attained non-reversal of the mind of unexcelled perfect enlightenment. When asked the reason, Amitābha Buddha says the light is not without cause or reason:

“Now, today, Shih-chia-mou-ni Tathāgata with correct, complete knowledge, wishes to address the Bodhisattvas on the *Precious treasure abiding samādhi sūtra* (*Chen pao ch’u san mai ching* 珍寶處三昧經). Therefore there first appears an auspicious omen.” Then Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih Great Bodhisattvas said to Buddha [Amitābha], “World Honored One, we wish to go to the Sahā world, respectfully worship Shih-chia-mou-ni Buddha and hear him speaking this Dharma.” [Amitābha] Buddha said, “Good men, it is fitting at this time.”<sup>228</sup>

Thus Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih request to go to the Sahā World to pay respects to Śākyamuni and to hear his Dharma teaching, and Amitābha Buddha agrees. There then follows a splendid display of the powers of these two Great Bodhisattvas as they go to the Sahā World with 40 million Bodhisattvas of like mind. Forty-million magnificent jewel terraces are created of varying combinations of precious jewels and all bedecked with fabulous adornments of canopies, lion thrones, bells, music, incense, jewel trees, etc. These jewel terraces surround the Sahā World, which becomes “flat like water.”<sup>229</sup> When they go to the place of Śākyamuni Buddha, the two Great Bodhisattvas pay respects to Śākyamuni and relay Amitābha Buddha’s request about his well being.

Then the events connected with Śākyamuni’s teaching unfold. All the beings of the assembly see the treasure terraces; each thought they came from the An-lo realm to this world by reason of the Buddha’s power and the Bodhisattvas’ power. Hua-te-tsang p’u-sa asks by whose power this marvelous rare event occurred; Buddha answers that it is by the penetrating spiritual power of Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih. Hua-te-tsang p’u-sa, who is concerned about the attainment of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*) by all beings, and in order to inspire the beings in the assembly, then asks Buddha to tell about the experience of Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih in attaining the bodhi mind. At this point the sutra shifts to the subject of these two Great Bodhisattvas and the explanation of their attainments.

Buddha relates that in a previous kalpa of the distant past during the period of “Desire Exhausted”, in a world called “Boundless Virtue Collection and Peaceful Bliss Appearance” (Wu-liang te-chü an-lo shih-hsien 無量德聚安樂示現), he [i.e., Śākyamuni Buddha] was the first great king of that kalpa. This world had a Buddha called Golden Light Lion Roaming Tathāgata (Chin-kuang shih-tzu yu-hsi)<sup>230</sup>

<sup>228</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), p. 354b.

<sup>229</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), p. 355a.

<sup>230</sup> *Vikrīḍita* (yu-hsi), to roam freely (as in the realm of the liberated mind), to roam for pleasure, play or sport. Soothill (1937/1977), p. 414b.



ju-lai 金光師子遊戲如來). The king, Wei-te wang 威德王, supported this Buddha for 84,000 million years. This king followed the Wu-liang fa-yin 無量法印 (Boundless Dharma Seal)<sup>231</sup> and attained the concentration (i-nien 一念) of Hui-hsiang wu-liang 迴向無量 (Limitless Goal). Once, when meditating in his garden, two lotuses appeared with two boys seated cross-legged. When Wei-te wang emerged from his visualization, he saw the two boys, each on a lotus, one at his left and the other at his right. In verse he asked who they were and each responded in verse. One was called Pao-i 寶意 and the other was called Pao-shang 寶上. Wei-te wang took them to Golden Light Lion Roaming Buddha. After paying respects the two boys together with the same voice in verse asked the Buddha what is the supreme kung-yang (offering)—flowers, music, fragrance, clothes, etc.? Golden Light Lion Roaming Buddha answered that the superior offering is bodhi mind. It is at this time that these two boys developed the aspiration for supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*).

Then Buddha Śākyamuni tells Hua-te-ts'ang p'u-sa that he was the king Wei-te wang and that the two boys are now Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih Great Bodhisattvas. Hua-te-tsang p'u-sa praises them as "most heroic" and asks about the direction of the Wu-liang te-chü an-lo shih-hsien world at present.<sup>232</sup> Buddha answers, "Good man, the present An-lo realm 安樂世界 of the western direction 西方 at that time was called Wu-liang te-chü an-lo shih-hsien 無量德聚安樂示現." Hua-te-tsang p'u-sa asks Buddha to explain, saying that countless sentient beings will be benefited thereby. Further, he asks where Kuan-shih-yin attained enlightenment, the name of that world, and the long life destiny of Śrāvakas and Bodhisattvas to reach complete enlightenment.

Buddha Śākyamuni then relates the future narrative and offers the predictions. After countless kalpas, Amitābha Buddha will enter Parinirvāṇa. In the period of the extinction of the Dharma, there will be various Bodhisattvas who attain the *nien-fo san-mei* 念佛三昧 (Samādhi of Buddha concentration) and always see A-mi-t'o fo. Kuan-shih-yin under the seven-jewel bodhi tree sitting cross-legged will attain correct enlightenment and be called P'u-kuang kung-te shan-wang ju-lai 普光功德山王如來 (Universal Light Offering Virtue Mountain King Tathāgata). His Buddha land is called Chung-pao 衆寶 (Abundant Treasures) and is excellently and completely adorned beyond description. It is without Śrāvaka's or Prateyabuddha's name—"only various Bodhisattvas fill that country."<sup>233</sup> Following the long life destiny of P'u-kuang kung-te shan-wang Tathāgata, Te-ta p'u-sa (Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva) will come to Nirvāṇa, and after Parinirvāṇa and the total extinction of the Dharma, then already with regard to his realm, he completed supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*). He is called Shan-chu kung-te pao-wang ju-lai 善住功德寶王如來 (Goodness Dwelling Offering Virtue Treasure King Tathāgata) with a brilliant realm and long-life destiny, like P'u-kuang kung-te shan-wang. If good men and good women hear his name, all will obtain non-reversing supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak saṃbodhi*), and among those in the past who heard about Golden Light Lion Roaming Tathāgata and Shang-chu kung-te pao-wang Tathāgata's name, all women will change the body, and through 40 million kalpas of birth and death, no one will change with regard to supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*), but will always obtain seeing Buddha, hear and receive the correct Dharma, etc.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>231</sup> Vinaya without limit, meditation without limit, wisdom without limit, the six paramita without limit, adorning the pure land without limit, etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 355c-356a.

<sup>232</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), p. 356c.

<sup>233</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), p. 357a.

<sup>234</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 371), p. 357b.



At that time 60 million in the assembly voiced “Nan-wu Ten-Direction Parinirvāṇa Buddhas” 南無十方般涅槃佛 and developed the mind of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). Buddha then predicted they will complete supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). Then Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih Great Bodhisattvas with spiritual power allowed this assembly entirely to see the ten-direction countless Buddhas all giving their predictions of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). Overjoyed by this, Hua-te-tsang p’u-sa asked Buddha the merit and virtue of upholding, reading, chanting, explaining, speaking, writing, widely propagating, etc. this sutra for those in the suffering world of sentient beings. Buddha replied it is incomparable even to the merits and virtue of caring for all sentient beings and providing them with everything they need. Hua-te-tsang then vows to always receive, uphold, read, chant, explain, propagate etc. the sutra and to develop the aspiration for supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). He finally vows that when he becomes a Buddha, if there is a woman who hears this Dharma, and wishes to change the woman’s body, then it will be done, and all will have predictions and obtain supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). All who heard what Buddha spoke greatly rejoiced.

c) Some Major Points Concerning the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching*

The following points are of particular interest here with regard to the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching*:

- 1) the repeated stress on the importance of attaining, and helping others to obtain, *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*, the wish for highest perfect enlightenment, which is stated with frequency throughout the text. This is one fundamental focus of this sutra and may reflect a stage of development in sutra literature and/or an interest in the translation of certain texts in China where this particular feature became singled out as paramount. This feature is also seen in the *Kuan-fo san-mei hai-ching*, but without the same force or repetition as seen here.
- 2) the prevalent usage of “praising of the name” (“nan-wu”, often known nowadays by the Japanese name “nembutsu”), of Śākyamuni, Amitābha, and the Ten-Direction Parinirvāṇa Buddhas by the large assemblies of Bodhisattvas, etc. This reveals a sharpened focus on praise, though apparently not the usage of repeatedly praising the name as a mode of practice that occurs in later times, such as known in the more developed Pure Land traditions.
- 3) the importance of the Bodhisattva as a great being with powers tantamount to those of a Buddha, showing extraordinary powers by Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih to create magnificent terraces and to let the assemblies witness predications of the Buddhas of the Ten-Directions regarding the attainment of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*) to those who raised the aspiration during the progress of this sutra.
- 4) the inter-relatedness of the Buddha-land of Amitābha (the “An-lo realm” of Sukhavāṭī) with that of the Sahā world of Śākyamuni. This is brought out continuously by the shifting of the narrative from one world to the other, and the collapsing or ignoring of any sense of a barrier between the two, despite the continual reminder that all of these Buddha-lands all unfathomably countless distances and of unfathomably countless numbers.

5) the enlarging of the information specifically concerning Kuan-shih-yin and Te-ta-shih Bodhisattvas, including their personal history, their relation with Śākyamuni in the past, and the prediction, by Śākyamuni, of their Buddhahood in the future, their Buddha name and the name of their Buddha-land. These details do not appear in the *Smaller Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* (T 366) or in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) translation of the *Larger Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*. However, there was indication in the two surviving older translations of the *Larger Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*, the [Ta] *A-mi-t'o Ching* (T 362) and the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361). It appears that the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching*, translated ca. 420 by T'an-wu-chieh, fills in that narrative and thus causes increased knowledge of and inspiration for the attainment of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* by those who hear and read this text.

6) the continued emphasis on the power and importance of samādhi appears here, though it is not stressed as much as seen in a sutra such as the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra*, or in the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* and other “Kuan” sutras, which specifically focus on visualization and samādhi and were mostly translated into Chinese during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The concern for women attaining a changed body is voiced on three occasions in this sutra, which puts unusual emphasis on this factor. This sutra combines many elements like these, but the dominant focus is on the attaining of supreme, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*).

#### d) Questions of Terminology in Relation to Group 6

This text has some terminology corresponding to that used by Kumārajīva, namely, “An-lo” 安樂 (for Sukhāvātī) and Kuan-shih yin 觀世音, both used by Kumārajīva in his translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (the *Miao fa lien hua ching*; the *Lotus Sutra*) translated 406 A.D.<sup>235</sup> However, the *Miao fa lien hua ching* does not use the term Chi-lo 極樂 seen in Kumārajīva's 402 translation of the (Smaller) *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*. “Chi-lo” is, however, used in the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* (said to have been translated by Buddhahadra in ca. 412/416-420) and the *Kuan Wu liang-shou fo ching* (translated by Kālayāśas in ca. 424-442). “An-lo” is also used in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (discussed above in no. 2)c) as probably translated ca. 421) as one of the terms for Sukhāvātī, as are the names Kuan-shih-yin and Ta-shih-chih (See Appendix II). The name for the Buddha is A-mi-t'o, with the characters corresponding to those used by the early translation of the [Larger] *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* (T 362, probably translated by Lokakṣema in late later Han), and also used by Kumārajīva for his translation of the *Smaller Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* (402 A.D.). It is, however, different from the “Wu-liang-shou fo” (Amitāyus) of the Group 6 niche inscription.

Perhaps most interesting is the case of Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching* (T 371) uses the characters “Te-ta-shih” 得大勢, apparently first used by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) in his translation of the *Brahmaviśeṣacīnīparipṛcchā Sūtra* (T 585), ca. 286 A.D. (See no. 6) above and Appendix II). Kumārajīva used the same characters in his translation of the same text (T 586) in 402 A.D. So it would appear that T'an-wu-chieh was following the Dharmarakṣa/Kumārajīva precedent with regard to this name. However, with respect to the Group 6 inscription, which uses the characters 得大勢至 (Te-ta-shih-chih), none of these texts is precisely matching because of the inclusion of the character “chih” 至 in the Group 6 inscription. The character “chih” is first seen in the

<sup>235</sup> The name Kuan-shih-yin might also have been used in the Western Chin translation of the *Kuan-shih-yin shou chi ching* 觀世音授記經 by Che Tao-chen 聶道真, but this sutra has not been transmitted. All we have is the record of the text from a later sutra record book, the *Li-tai-san-pao chi* (Sui period), chüan 6. As is well-known, titles alone are generally not sufficient to establish the terminology that was used in the original translation.

name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta as translated by Chih-ch'ien in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (trans. 223-228 A.D.): 大勢至 (Ta-shih-chih),<sup>236</sup> and is also used by Dharmarakṣa in his translation of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Cheng fa-hua ching* (T 263), see no. 5)a.) and, interestingly later used by Kālayāśas in his translation of the *Kuan wu-liang shou fo ching* (ca. 424-442 A.D., see no. 17 below), none of which, however, also include the character “Te” 得 as used in the Dharmarakṣa/Kumārajīva/T'an-wu-chieh translations. However, the Group 6 inscription uses both the “Te” (for “prāpta” = to obtain), of the Dharmarakṣa/Kumārajīva/T'an-wu-chieh translations and the “chih” of the Chih-ch'ien/Dharmarakṣa/Kālayāśas translations. This is something of a complex and mixed situation, probably reflecting the fluid conditions and active translation work following Kumārajīva's massive translation project in Ch'ang-an and subsequent productions, especially in the late Eastern Chin and early [Liu] Sung in the South following the collapse of Ch'ang-an from ca. 416 until the conquest by the Northern Wei in the late 420's. We will return to this issue below.

17) *Kuan Wu-liang-shou [fo] ching* 觀無量壽(佛)經 (commonly referred to as the *Kuan ching* 觀經), 1 chüan, said to have been translated by Kālayāśas (Chiang-liang-yeh-sha 量良耶舍 between 424-442 A.D. (in the Yüan-chia 元嘉 period [424-453] of [Liu] Sung). *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), pp. 340c-346b. Korean catalogue (K 191). There is no Sanskrit, Tibetan or variant Chinese recension known to exist (even in records) of this sutra. This is an important text in the developments of Amitābha Pure Land belief and practice in China, and, as we shall see below, may be consequential with regard to an inscription (other than the Chien-yung first year inscription) in Group 6. However, the text is not without some controversy with regard to attribution of translator and origin of authorship.<sup>237</sup>

a) Translation of the *Kao-seng chuan* Biography of Kālayāśas

In order to help understand some of the issues surrounding this important text, the short biography of Kālayāśas from the *Kao-seng chuan* is translated here in full:<sup>238</sup>

Chiang-liang-yeh-sha 量良耶舍 (Kālayāśas). It is said that he was renowned of the times 時稱. He was a Western Regions person. In character he was firm, straight-forward and without desires. He was excellent in chanting the *A-pi-t'an* 阿毘曇 (*Abhidharma*) and he had wide command of the vinaya section (lū pu 律部). As far as the other sutras are concerned, he was able mostly to sum them up. Although he was completely brilliant with the Tripiṭaka, he was above all skillful at dhyāna. Every time he did dhyāna visualization, he did not rise for seven days. Always by means of samādhi and concentration (directly receiving) he propagated and converted various countries. At the beginning of Yüan-chia 元嘉 (424-453 A.D.), he ventured from far away over deserts and rivers (or, over the river of sand according to R. Shih) and came to the capital (Chien-k'ang, capital of the [Liu] Sung). T'ai-tsu, Emperor Wen (r. 424-452), deeply admired and rejoiced [in him], and by edict had him stay

<sup>236</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 474), p. 519b. Kumārajīva's translation of 406 A.D. uses “Te-ta-shih 得大勢 p'u-sa. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 475), p. 537b.

<sup>237</sup> Fujita Kōtatsu, “The Textual Origins of the Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching: A Canonical Scripture of Pure land Buddhism,” translated by Kenneth K. Tanaka from Fujita (1970), pp. 116-136, with additional commentary footnotes by Tanaka, in Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (ed.), *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Honolulu, 1990, pp. 149-73.

<sup>238</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), pp. 343c-344a. It is basically repeated in the *Chen-yüan hsin ting shih chiao mu lu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (early T'ang), and also in the *K'ai-yüan shih chiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (8<sup>th</sup> century). Also see Robert Shih, *Biographies des Moines Éminents (Kao Seng Tchouan) de Houei-Kiao*, Louvain, 1968, pp. 147-148 for translation into French of the *Kao-seng chuan* biography.

at Chung-shan's 鍾山 Tao-lin *vihara* 道林精舍. Sha-men Pao-chih 寶誌 highly esteemed [Kālayaśas'] meditation method (ch'an-fa 禪法). Sha-men Seng-han 僧含 requested him to translate the *Yao-wang Yao-shang kuan* 藥王藥上觀 and the *Wu liang shou-kuan* 無量壽觀. Seng-han then wrote them down with a brush. With these two sutras there is the secret skill to overcome obstacles and the profound cause of [attaining] the pure land (ch'ing-tu 淨土). Therefore with chanting and admiration they [these texts] circulated through the country of Sung. P'ing-ch'ang's 平昌 Meng-i 孟顗, rejoicingly admired the reputation [of Kālayaśas] and provided generously [for him, as a donor]. [When] Meng-i became governor of K'uai-chi 會稽, he strongly requested [Kālayaśas to accompany him, but Kālayaśas] did not go. Later [Kālayaśas] went to Chiang-ling 江陵 (west of Lu shan on the Yangtzu River in Hupei). In Yüan-chia 元嘉 19<sup>th</sup> year (442) he traveled west to Min-shu 岷蜀 (Szechwan area). From place to place he propagated Buddhism and meditation study, and established groups. Later he returned and died at Chiang-ling. He was age 60.<sup>239</sup>

Kālayaśas arrived in South China in ca. 424, at the beginning of the [Liu] Sung dynasty. From the biography we learn that he was a Western Regions person, which probably means he was from Central Asia. If he were from Kashmir, Gandhāra or Afghanistan, the designation would probably have been a Chi-pin 罽賓 person, rather than Western Regions. He came with a reputation for knowing the scriptures, but especially as one skillful in dhyāna meditation and visualization. In Chien-k'ang, the capital of the [Liu] Sung, he was admired by the emperor and other monks, two of whom are particularly mentioned: Pao-chih (for respecting his dhyāna method) and Seng-han, who requested him to translate two texts, including the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou [fo] ching*, and who wrote them down as scribe.

The *Kao-seng chuan* biography is the oldest extant record with the citation that Kālayaśas was the translator of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* (and also of the *Kuan Yao-wang Yao-shang ching*), so it becomes a particularly important record.<sup>240</sup> The actual translation occurred in the South, probably at the Tao-lin *vihara* on Chung shan. The biography specifically states that both texts were popular and circulated widely in the South. This indicates that the people of the time were eager for this kind of visualization text. Only the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* possibly translated by Buddhahadra (ca. 412-420, see section II.A.2.c. no. 14) and several shorter "kuan" sutras translated by Kumārajīva were probably earlier "kuan" (visualization) texts to have been translated into Chinese at this time. It is acknowledged by scholars that the *Kuan ching* is considerably influenced in terms of terminology, wording and style by the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*. The *Kuan ching* more than any other sutra describes the Buddha land of Amitābha, the vision of Amitābha, and the two great Bodhisattvas, both individually and as a triad. The popularity of the text, as specifically indicated by the *Kao-seng chuan* biography, very possibly reflects a desire on the part of the people, especially those in the South, both religious and lay, to learn more about the description of the pure land, the method of visualization, and the manner of birth in the Buddha land.

In 442 Kālayaśas went to Min-shu (Szechwan region) where he taught meditation, propagated and formed religious (probably meditation) groups. It can be assumed that the *Kuan ching* probably became known in that region through his teaching as well as in the Chiang-ling and Chien-k'ang areas where Kālayaśas had stayed. This suggests that he propagated his meditation/visualization method

<sup>239</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 3, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), p. 343c.

<sup>240</sup> With regard to the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*, the CSTCC (compiled 502-515 A.D., *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 22a) lists it under "records of miscellaneous sūtras by anonymous translators." Later sutra catalogues that mention Kālayaśas as the translator are the *Fa-ching lu* (593), the *Nei-tien lu* (644) and the *K'ai-yüan lu* (730) as well as the *Sung-ch'i lu* (already lost by Sui). Fujita (1990), p. 151.

and the texts he had translated throughout the [Liu] Sung region, up and down the Yangtzu River regions, including Szechwan, which, though frequently independent, was strongly influenced by cultural currents from the main centers of the South along the Yangtzu River and the capital city. Though the Min-shu region is close to Ping-ling ssu, by 442 the Western Ch'in had demised in 433 and the main work in Cave 169 was completed. From 439 the T'o-pa Wei had conquered the Kansu region, and was consolidating its power. In 446 the Northern Wei would institute a devastating persecution of Buddhism throughout its territories. At some point thereafter Kālayaśas returned to Chiang-ling (in Hupei) where he died at age sixty (date unknown).

b) Brief Synopsis and Some Pertinent Points Regarding Terminology

The *Kuan Wu-liang [fo] ching* has been translated into English several times.<sup>241</sup> It has long been considered one of the three main sutras of the Pure Land tradition in China and later in Korea and Japan. Many commentaries were written on this sutra in China from the Sui to Sung, including by Chih-i of the T'ien-t'ai and Shan-tao, the great Pure Land monk of early T'ang.<sup>242</sup>

The sutra opens in Rājagṛha (Rajgir), where the Buddha is staying on Vulture Peak with 1250 monks and 32,000 Bodhisattvas headed by Mañjuśrī (Wen-shu shih-li 文殊師利). Rājagṛha at that time was controlled by the prince Ajātaśatru, who had imprisoned his father, King Bimbisāra. The king was being kept alive by the food secretly brought by his Queen, Vaidehī. In this opening “prologue” events rapidly unfold in the tragic struggle between Ajātaśatru and his parents. Reaching the breaking point in grief and despair, the Queen, who has also been imprisoned by her son, calls Śākyamuni Buddha from afar. Knowing her despair, Śākyamuni Buddha appears seated on a lotus flower attended by Mahāmaudgalyāyana and Ānanda. When the Queen requests the Buddha to reveal to her a “Land of no sorrow and no affliction where I can be reborn ...”, the Buddha shows her the innumerable worlds of the ten-directions:

Then the World-Honored One sent forth from between his eyebrows a flood of light that was the color of gold and illuminated the innumerable worlds in the ten-directions. Returning to the Buddha, the light settled on his head and transformed itself into a golden platform resembling Mount Sumeru. On the platform appeared the pure and resplendent lands of all the Buddhas in the ten-directions 十方諸佛淨妙國土...<sup>243</sup>

When Queen Vaidehi asks the Buddha to teach her how to contemplate the Land of Utmost Bliss of Amitāyus, the Buddha teaches the 16 visualizations, the last three of which contain the nine grades of rebirth. The descriptions given in the visualization section are very detailed. The following are several examples that describe some of the features of particular interest in relation to the Group 6 niche imagery.

1) “... When these words were spoken, Amitāyus appeared in the air above, attended on his left and right by the two mahāsattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta” 說是語時無量壽佛住立空中...<sup>244</sup>

<sup>241</sup> *The Sutra on Contemplation of Amitāyus*, in *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, translated by Inagaki, Hisao in collaboration with Harold Stewart, Berkeley, CA, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995 (and revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2003); “The Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra,” translated by J. Takakusu, in *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts, Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. xlix, ed. by F. Max Müller, New York, 1969 (original 1894), pp. 161-201.

<sup>242</sup> “Translator’s Introduction,” by Kenneth K. Tanaka, in Fujita (1990), p. 149.

<sup>243</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), pp. 95-96; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 341b.

<sup>244</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p. 101; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 342c.



- 2) For the 7<sup>th</sup> contemplation (the “Lotus Throne”): “... Those who wish to see that Buddha should form an image of a lotus flower on the seven jeweled ground” 欲觀彼佛者當起想念於七寶地上作蓮花想 ...<sup>245</sup>
- 3) “... Buddha, Tathāgatas, have cosmic [Dharmakāya] bodies, and so enter into the meditating mind of each sentient being” 諸佛如來是法界身遍入一切衆生心想中...<sup>246</sup>
- 4) “... Your mind produces the Buddha’s image, and is itself the Buddha” 是心作佛是心是佛...<sup>247</sup>
- 5) “... When you visualize the Buddha you should first form his image...perceive a jeweled image of him, who is the color of gold from the Jambu River, sitting on that flower throne” 坐彼華上...<sup>248</sup>
- 6) “... After you have seen this image, visualize on the Buddha’s left a large lotus flower which is exactly the same as the one described above, and then another large one on his right. Visualize an image of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara [Kuan-shih-yin] sitting on the flower on his left 想一觀世音菩薩像坐左華座, sending forth a golden light just like the Buddha image described above, and then an image of the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta [Ta-shih-chih] sitting on the flower seat on his right” 想一大勢至菩薩像坐右華座 ...<sup>249</sup>
- 7) “... his height is 600,000 koṭis of nayutas of yojanas multiplied by the sands of the Ganges” 佛身高六十萬億那由他恒河沙由旬...<sup>250</sup>
- 8) “... In this aureole 圓光 [of Amitāyus] reside transformed Buddhas 化佛 numbering as many as a million koṭis of nayutas multiplied by the number of the sands of the Ganges ...”<sup>251</sup>
- 9) “... When you see Amitāyus, you will also see innumerable Buddhas of the ten-directions. Having visualized these innumerable Buddhas, you will receive from each the prediction 受記 of your future Buddhahood ...”<sup>252</sup>
- 10) Some further descriptions of the two great Bodhisattvas: Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音): “... On his head he wears a heavenly crown made of Śakra’s pendant mani-gems 頂上昆楞伽摩尼[妙]寶以爲天冠, on which stands a transformed Buddha (Amitāyus)<sup>253</sup> measuring twenty-five yojanas in height” 其天冠中有一立化佛高二十五由旬 ...<sup>254</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.102; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 342c.

<sup>246</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.103; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343a.

<sup>247</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.103; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343a.

<sup>248</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.103; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343a.

<sup>249</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.103-104; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343a-b.

<sup>250</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.104; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343b.

<sup>251</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.104-105; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343b.

<sup>252</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.105; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343c.

<sup>253</sup> Translator’s insertion; the characters for Amitāyus do not appear in the Chinese text.

<sup>254</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.106; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 343c.



Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Ta-shih-chih 大勢至): “... The heavenly crown of this bodhisattva is adorned with five hundred jeweled lotus flowers, each having five hundred jeweled pedestals 此菩薩天冠有五百寶蓮[華]. [Each jeweled flower has 500 jeweled terraces.]<sup>255</sup> On each pedestal [terrace] appear the pure and resplendent lands of the Buddhas in the ten-directions with all their boundless and glorious features 一一寶華有五百寶臺一一臺中十方諸佛淨妙國土廣長之相皆於中現. The mound on his head [i.e., the *jaṭāmukuta*], shaped like a lotus bud, has a jeweled vase in front 頂上肉髻如鉢頭摩花於肉髻上有一寶瓶. This is suffused with various lights which reveal all the activities of the Buddha” 諸光明普現佛事 ...<sup>256</sup>

11) “... next visualize yourself as born in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss sitting cross-legged upon a lotus flower” 當起想作心自見生於西方極樂世界於蓮華中結跏趺坐 ... (from the 12<sup>th</sup> contemplation).<sup>257</sup>

12) in the section of the nine grades of birth, the phrase: “... I now come to welcome you” 我今來迎接汝; “... I have come to welcome you” 我來迎汝, etc. occurs a number of times.<sup>258</sup>

13) for the one born into the highest level of the highest grade, after returning from visiting and worshipping all the Buddhas of the ten-directions and receiving from each of them a prediction of his future Buddhahood, “... he is endowed with hundreds of thousands of dharani” 得無量百千陀羅尼 ...<sup>259</sup>

These examples are to aid in understanding some of the visual descriptions of the images which can be used to relate to actual images and are not an attempt to analyze this text with regard to its doctrinal features. We will have occasion to refer to a number of these phrases and terms in a comparative way with the Group 6 inscriptions and with other texts that are pertinent to this study.

### c) Textual Issues

The problems regarding who translated the sutra and where it originated are well-known and difficult to resolve. Fujita summarizes the issues and presents some prevailing views. Briefly, they are as follows.

1) With regard to the translator into Chinese, the earliest Chinese record is the *Kao-seng chuan* biography (compiled by 519 by Hui-chiao), which clearly states that Kālayaśas is the translator. This is a credible record in itself, but it is not confirmed by the CTSCC (compiled 502-515), which lists this text as anonymous.<sup>260</sup> The earliest sutra record catalogue to credit the translation to Kālayaśas is from the Sui Dynasty (the *Fa-ching lu*, ca. 593 A.D.). The suggestion that Dharmamitra (356-442), who

<sup>255</sup> This sentence in brackets is my insertion; it does not appear in a literal fashion in Inagaki's translation, which combines the description into the word “pedestal”, which, in my view, is too general. The text gives a much more precise description as follows: the crown has 500 jewel lotus [flowers]. Each jewel flower has 500 jewel platforms [or terraces] (t'ai). Each platform [or terrace] in the center has the pure and resplendent lands of the various Buddhas of the ten-directions ...

<sup>256</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.107-108; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 344a.

<sup>257</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.108; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 344b.

<sup>258</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), pp. 111, 112, 113; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), pp. 345a, 345a-b, 345b, 345c.

<sup>259</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (1995), p.111; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 345a.

<sup>260</sup> K. Fujita, “The Textual Origins of the Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching: A Canonical Scripture of Pure Land Buddhism,” translated by Kenneth Tanaka from Fujita (1970), in Buswell (ed.), *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Honolulu, 1990, p. 151. Also see CTSCC, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 22a.

was in Chien-k'ang (capital of the [Liu] Sung) and translated meditation sutras about the same time as Kālayaśas, is not borne out by any recorded attribution to him as translator of the *Kuan wu-liang shou ching*.<sup>261</sup> Fujita seems to find the attribution to Kālayaśas reasonable, though the evidence is not sufficient to dispel all doubt.

2) The problem of origination of the text is a difficult one. The most cited possibilities of the general region are India, Central Asia, or China. The problem is compounded by the fact that there is no extant original Sanskrit, nor is there any Tibetan translation from a Sanskrit text. Interestingly, the same is true for other “kuan” (visualization) texts, which also have similar sets of conditions<sup>262</sup> and were translated in China during the period ca. 415-ca. 450, mostly in the South. Fujita seriously doubts that the extant text was compiled in India.<sup>263</sup>

However, in a recent article Jonathan Silk observes a relation in the narrative structure of the *Kuan ching* with some Indian Buddhist and Jain narratives. In his study of the parallels of the narrative in the early portions of the *Kuan ching* with Jaina literature in India, he brings out the probability that the “narrative frame of the story of Ajātaśatru” is directly based on Indian materials. He also concludes that “it is likewise clear that the *Guan-jing* as a whole cannot be an Indian product, and is most likely a work initially composed in the Chinese language, perhaps in Central Asia.”<sup>264</sup>

#### i) Central Asian Origination (or compilation)

Kālayaśas and other translators of the “kuan” texts apparently had ties with Central Asia.<sup>265</sup> We know from the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Kālayaśas translated above that he was a “Western Regions” person, which probably means Central Asia (other than Chi-pin, which would be Kashmir, Gandhāra and Afghanistan). Some of the “kuan” texts are known to have been obtained in Turfan, specifically those translated by Chü-ch'u Ching-sheng 沮渠京聲 a little later. Fujita, and others, make the observation that the *Kuan ching* in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> contemplations specifically speaks of contemplation of images (kuan-hsiang) in addition to the Buddha-contemplation (kuan-fo), a factor also seen in the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*,<sup>266</sup> which further speaks of other aspects of the region of Gandhāra and Afghanistan, such as the Dragon Cave at Nagarāhāra (Haḍḍa, Afghanistan) where the Buddha left his “projection” image.<sup>267</sup> To these scholars and some art historians, this indicates possible knowledge of that region and possible place of origin for the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*.<sup>268</sup> It is thought that other “kuan” could be a product of the same region. This may entail conflating the Chi-pin area with that of at least parts of Central Asia or the Western Regions, a problem which would need more consideration. In addition, the factor of the immense size of the Buddha and the two great Bodhisattvas described in the *Kuan ching*, is also present in the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*.<sup>269</sup> Fujita and others suggest these kinds of descriptions may have been influenced by the gigantic Buddhas of Bāmiyān, another factor

<sup>261</sup> Fujita (1990), pp. 152-153.

<sup>262</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 155.

<sup>263</sup> Fujita (1990), pp. 155-156.

<sup>264</sup> Jonathan Silk, “The Composition of the Guan Wuliangshoufo-Jing: Some Buddhist and Jaina Parallels to its Narrative Frame,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, (1997), No. 25, pp. 181-220.

<sup>265</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 156.

<sup>266</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 157.

<sup>267</sup> See Rhie (2002), chapter 1, section C.2.b.ii.c., pp. 118-127.

<sup>268</sup> Soper (1959), pp. 184-186 where he speaks about the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* as originating from the “frontier” provenance areas, such as possibly Afghanistan, sometime in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>269</sup> Fujita (1990), pp. 158-159.

which could point to an origin in that general area.<sup>270</sup> He is not specific with investigating this possibility, especially with regard to dates, but the idea warrants some further attention, particularly since the dating of those colossal images, as well as those of the Kucha area, can offer some signs of the time and region where the concept of colossal size images was of interest. This issue will be specifically addressed in Vol. IV of this series.

## ii) Chinese “Compilation”

The Chinese compilation theory, first proposed by Tsukinowa Kenryū (1953), rests mainly on the usage of terminology, doctrine and translation style, which, according to Fujita (and others), relies on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (probably translated ca. 421 in the South) and the *Kuan fo san-mei hai-ching*, translated in Chien-k'ang probably ca. 412-420. Such terms as ch'eng-ming 稱名 (“reciting the name”) and other “Chinese-tinged terms” which cannot be traced back to Sanskrit texts, are cases in point.<sup>271</sup> Yamada Meiji's suggestion that the text was a combination of three texts that were joined together could support a Chinese compilation theory.<sup>272</sup> Further, the nine levels of rebirth as a reflection of the ancient Chinese ideas of the nine classes of people or the nine grades of officials is cited by Nogami Shunjō as related to Chinese rather than Indian notions.<sup>273</sup> Fujita's concluding view is that the “core of the *Kuan ching* transmitted a meditation that was then practiced somewhere in Central Asia, possibly the Turfan area. When translating the sutra, Kālayāśas probably did so orally, since it is reported that Seng-han 僧含 served as scribe. In this process, the sutra's concepts and expression assumed a Chinese coloring, since numerous Chinese-translated scriptures were consulted and utilized, beginning with the *Wu-liang-shou ching*.”<sup>274</sup>

## d) Terminology Used in the *Kuan ching* and Cave 169 Group 6 Inscriptions

In the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (the *Kuan ching*), the Buddha is called both Wu-liang-shou fo 無量壽佛<sup>275</sup> and A-mi-t'ō fo 阿彌陀佛,<sup>276</sup> with more occurrence of the latter. A study by Yamada Meiji<sup>277</sup> has shown that A-mi-t'ō fo is mostly used in the first third and last third of the text, whereas the middle portion uses mostly Wu-liang-shou fo. This is one reason that suggests to him that this text was a compilation of three different texts (namely, the Ajātaśatru story, the first thirteen contemplations, and the last three contemplations on the nine grades of rebirth) with the original wording of each of the three original texts basically kept, except in the one or two places where there is the appearance of the other name mixed in—possibly a result of the translator attempting to make a degree of unity by integrating (overlapping) the name terminology.<sup>278</sup>

The two Bodhisattvas, who are named with frequency in the *Kuan ching*, are called Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音<sup>279</sup> and Ta-shih-chih 大勢至.<sup>280</sup> The characters “Kuan-shih-yin” are well-known from

<sup>270</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 158.

<sup>271</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 160. Also see Fujita's table of examples on pp. 164-165.

<sup>272</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 171, note 108 (comment by K. Tanaka, translator of this article into English).

<sup>273</sup> Nogami, Shunjō, *Chūgoku Jōdokyō-shiron*, Kyoto, 1981, pp. 178-183.

<sup>274</sup> Fujita (1990), p. 163.

<sup>275</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), p. 342c.

<sup>276</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), pp. 341c, 344c, 345a, 345c, etc.

<sup>277</sup> Yamada Meiji, “Kangyō kō—Muryōju-butsu to Amida-butsu,” *Ryūkoku daigaku ronshū*, No. 408 (1976), pp. 76-95, as noted in Fujita (1990), note 108, pp. 171-172 (comment by K. Tanaka, translator of Fujita (1990) article).

<sup>278</sup> Fujita (1990), note 108 on p. 171 (comment by K. Tanaka, translator of the article into English).

<sup>279</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), pp. 341c, 344c, 345a, 345c, etc. and pp. 344a, 344c, 346a, etc.

<sup>280</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), pp. 344a, 344c, 246a, etc.

Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Miao fa lien hua ching*, 406 A.D.). The same Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音 characters are also used in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (possibly ca. 421) and by T'an-wu-chieh in the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching* (T 371), which was probably translated by T'an-wu-chieh sometime in the early [Liu] Sung after his return from India (he left China for India in 420 A.D.). The set of characters "Ta-shih-chih" 大勢至 is used first by Chih-ch'ien during ca. 223-228 in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, then by Dharmarakṣa in ca. 286 in the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*), and also in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (possibly ca. 421).<sup>281</sup> The translator of the *Kuan ching* with regard to "Ta-shih-chih" 大勢至 was thus following the precedent of Chih-ch'ien (in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*), Dharmarakṣa (in the *Cheng fa-hua ching* [*Lotus Sutra*]), and possibly the translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, which may have been translated ca. 421 in Chien-k'ang by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün.

The Buddha-land in the *Kuan ching* is usually called Hsi-fang Chi-lo kuo-t'ü 西方極樂國土,<sup>282</sup> but is also sometimes simply referred to as the Western Land (His-fang 西方), or Amitābha's Land of Utmost Bliss (A-mi-t'ō fo Chi-lo shih k'ai) and other variants and combinations. The terminology "Chi-lo" 極樂 follows both that of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha* and Buddhahadra's *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*, neither of which, however, cite the Bodhisattvas.

The *Kuan ching* text is in close agreement with the wording used in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* for the names of the Buddha, the pure land and the two great Bodhisattvas. Both also interestingly lack the character "Te" 得 which occurs at the beginning of "Te ta-shih-chih's" name in the Group 6 colophon (that is, the character "te" 得 is not used in either the *Kuan ching* or the *Wu-liang shou ching* as part of the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta). The "Te" character in the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta appears in the translation of the Kuan-shih-yin Ta-shih-chih shou chüeh ching 觀世音大勢至受記經 (T 371) translation made by Tan-wu-chieh in ca. 420 in the South (see section II.A.2.c, no. 16 above and Appendix II).

Both the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 365) have problems regarding the translator and/or knowing the date of translation into Chinese. As discussed above in no. 2) c), the most prevailing theory concerning the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching* is that it was translated by Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün and put out in 421 at the Tao-ch'ang ssu in Chien-k'ang. Prevailing opinion concerning the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* agrees with Kālayaśas as the translator, but the date is given a broad range from 424-442 and has not so far been able to be judged more specifically.

#### d. Summary and Conclusions Regarding the Textual Comparisons and Survey of the Amitābha/Amitāyus Sutra Translations in China up to ca. 425 A.D. with Respect to the Group 6 Inscriptions

From the above survey data, we can summarize the points made so far regarding comparative terminology, content and style of translation as it pertains to the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 6 inscriptions.

<sup>281</sup> This set of characters ("Ta-shih-chih" 大勢至) does not follow the name characters as used by Kumārajīva in his translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, the *Miao fa lien-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*), and the *Questions of Brahmā Sūtra*, all of which use Te-ta-shih 得大勢, as did Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) in ca. 286 in the *Ch'ih hsin fan t'ien so wen ching* (*Questions of Brahma Sutra*) and Tan-wu-chieh in ca. 420 in the *Kuan-shih-yin shou-chi ching* (T 371). Interestingly, the "Te" character does appear in the title of the translation made by Dharmarakṣa in ca. 286: *Kuang-shih-yin Ta-shih-chih shou chüeh ching* 光世音大勢至受決經. However, this Dharmarakṣa translation is lost and only the title remains.

<sup>282</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 365), pp. 341c, 343a, 344b, 345a, 345b, 345a, etc.

1) The Buddha named as Amitābha (A-mi-t'ō) is the only Buddha mentioned by name in the earliest text translated into Chinese that cites Amitābha—the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (translated by Lokakṣema and put out in 179 A.D. during the Later Han in Loyang). Here the goal is meditation to visualize the Buddha as though standing before one and to hear the Dharma directly from the Buddha. There is no mention of the Bodhisattvas with Amitābha, though there is mention of his Buddha-land (*Buddhakṣetra*), Sukhāvātī (called Hsü-ma-t'i 須摩提), in the western direction (of the ten-directions). Though this sutra was revered and studied by Hui-yüan on Lu shan in South China in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century, it does not appear to be the particular basis for the Group 6 triad, which clearly includes the triad of the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvātī together with Amitāyus.

2) The two early translations of the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* into Chinese occurred in the Later Han (T 362, probably by Lokakṣema) and the Three Kingdoms (T 361, probably by Chih-ch'ien). These are the translations of the main scripture on Amitābha/Amitāyus, which details the history of Dharmākara and his vows (24 in these two early translations), the full description of Sukhāvātī along with the mention of the two great Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, who are both always in attendance to the left and right of Amitābha/Amitāyus, and discussion of the five evils and the five goods. Though there is disagreement among scholars on the translators of both texts, there is general agreement that both are early. Most recently, Paul Harrison suggests that the [Ta] *A-mi-t'ō ching* (T 362) was translated by Lokakṣema and the *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching* (T 361) was probably translated by Chih-ch'ien, a view also recently supported by Jan Nattier.<sup>283</sup> The Buddha is called A-mi-t'ō in the former and both *Wu-liang ch'ing-ching* and A-mi-t'ō in the latter. In both translations the two Bodhisattvas are named (phonetically) by the same combination of Chinese characters: Ho-lou-hsüan 蓋樓亘 (for Avalokiteśvara) and Ma-ho-na-po 摩訶那鉢 (for Mahāsthāmaprāpta). Thus, the Buddhist history of Amitābha/Amitāyus and the 24 vows of Dharmākara, the full description of his Buddha-land, naming of the two great Bodhisattvas, and the five evils and five goods of this world are all present and known in China by the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. These texts, however, are probably not the basis for the Group 6 triad, since the names of the Buddha and each Bodhisattva are not the same characters as used in the Group 6 colophons. In these two translations there is no written distinguishing physical appearance that could be considered a significant identifying feature in regard to the visual form that would distinguish Avalokiteśvara from Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

3) The first translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* by Chih-ch'ien in the Three Kingdoms period names Amitābha among a group of twelve Buddhas. The characters *Wu-liang* [ju-lai] are used for the Buddha Amitāyus. The interesting point is that Amitāyus is taken as one of the important Buddhas of early Mahāyāna in this sutra, but why the group has twelve Buddhas is not clear. In Chih-ch'ien's translation of a short sutra, the *Lao-nü jen ching* (T 559), the Buddha-land (Sukhāvātī) is termed "A-mi-t'ō fo kuo" 阿彌陀佛國, the country or realm of Amitābha.

4) The first translation of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) by Dharmarakṣa in 286 (the *Cheng fa-hua ching*) in Ch'ang-an under the Western Chin, a major Mahāyāna text, has two citations of Amitābha/Amitāyus. The first cites his name as "Wu-liang-shou fo" 無量壽佛. This is the

<sup>283</sup> Nattier (2006), p. 186 and note 9.



first time to use the full wording of Wu-liang-shou fo (rather than Wu-liang [ju-lai 如來], as seen in Chih-ch'ien's translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*), which will become a standard for more than 100 years, especially in the South and as used by Hui-yüan. The second citation in the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (Dharmarakṣa's *Lotus Sutra* translation) is in connection with Amitābha/Amitāyus Buddha's Buddhakṣetra, Sukhāvātī, which is written as "An-yang kuo" 安養國 (the country of peaceful nourishment). There is no mention of the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvātī in either of these two citations in the Dharmarakṣa translation. However, Avalokiteśvara (using the characters "Kuang-shih-yin" 光世音 for the first time in a Chinese translation), has a complete chapter as an independent Bodhisattva who compassionately saves beings from perils, etc. This chapter was so popular in China that it circulated as an independent sutra.<sup>284</sup> From this chapter, in conjunction with the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha* in the two early translations, Avalokiteśvara distinctively appears as two representations: as a singular great Bodhisattva of compassion and as a great attending Bodhisattva together with Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the Buddhaland of Amitābha/Amitāyus. However, even the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*) chapter on Avalokiteśvara does not describe Avalokiteśvara with any distinguishing visual characteristics of the kind that would pertain to images (such as we come to know later with the image of [Amitābha] Buddha on the head or crown).

5) By the Eastern Chin (317-420) these important early texts had introduced Amitābha as Buddha of his Buddha-land in the western direction, as one of the great Buddhas of the ten-directions, as one of a group of twelve Tathāgatas, and have described in detail his history, his vows, his teaching, and his two great Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, in his Buddha-land (Sukhāvātī). In addition, the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, the Dharmarakṣa 286 A.D. translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*), has informed in a prominent way the great Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as compassionate savior of beings. We then see in the records, from the South in particular, that Amitābha/Amitāyus was worshipped by such famous Chinese Buddhist monks as Chih-tun in the early Eastern Chin, and Hui-yüan in the mid and late Eastern Chin. As known from literary records, images were made of Amitābha: a painting worshipped by Chih-tun, an image (probably sculpture) for Chu Fa-k'uang who built a hall for it, an Amitābha (probably a statue) at the Prajñā terrace at Hui-yüan's monastery the Tung-lin ssu on Lu-shan where the group of 123 followers took the vow to be reborn in Sukhāvātī, and a colossal wooden statue made by the famous artist Tai K'uei at the Ling-pao ssu ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century, all during the Eastern Chin in the South. Records reveal that in the South the favored name for the Buddha of Sukhāvātī was Amitāyus (Wu-liang-shou fo, Buddha of infinite [endless] life). Hui yüan, renowned master monk of Lu shan, raised the belief in Amitābha/Amitāyus to the level of an organized group (the White Lotus Society) for the communal veneration of Amitābha/Amitāyus, and 123 persons, both monastic and secular, including some high members of society whose names are recorded, gathered on September 11, 402, and before the image of Amitābha/Amitāyus took the vow to be reborn in Sukhāvātī. A record of this was made by Liu I-min,<sup>285</sup> who was asked by Hui-yüan to record the event, and it is included in the biography of Hui-yüan. Further, when the monk Seng-yu was dying at Lu shan, his biography states that Hui-yüan requested the assembly of monks to chant the "Wu-liang shou ching." This is the first occurrence of hearing the title of the sutra *Wu-liang-shou ching*, which is the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha*, though it comes from the biography of Seng-yu in the

<sup>284</sup> Chapter 23, chüan 10 of the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), pp. 128c-129c.

<sup>285</sup> Liu Ch'eng-chih 劉程之, known as "Liu the recluse" (354-410 A.D.). Zürcher (1959 and 2007), pp. 244 and 217.



*Kao-seng chuan* (ca. 530 compiled), so it may not be certain to be date specific to the life-time of Hui-yüan (d. ca. 416) without other confirmation.

6) With Kumārajīva's translation activity in Ch'ang-an under the Later Ch'in from ca. 402-ca. 409, 411 or 413)<sup>286</sup> a major plateau was reached regarding translations of Buddhist texts into Chinese. At the express request of Yao Hsing (r. 393-416), ruler of the Later Ch'in and sponsor of Kumārajīva's translation project, Kumārajīva re-translated some of the most popular sutras which were deemed to need correction. These included the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (406) and the *Lotus Sutra* (406), in both of which he used the terminology of Amitābha/Amitāyus, Sukhāvātī, and Avalokiteśvara to be: A-mi-t'ō 阿彌陀, An-lo shih chieh 安樂世界, and Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音 respectively, the latter two apparently used for the first time. In the *Ta A-mi-t'ō ching* 大阿彌陀經 (*Smaller Sukhāvativyūha*), the only extant version of this text, which he translated in 402, he established the term for Sukhāvātī as Chi-lo kuo-t'ū 極樂國土. This short sutra, which, in the opinion of some, may be from a earlier text than the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha*, does not include the two great Bodhisattvas. Kumārajīva is not known to have re-translated the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha*.

7) Buddhahadra was a great meditation master who studied in Chi-pin (Gandhāra or Kashmir, and most likely to be Gandhāra at this time period) and came to China at the urging of Chih-yen 智嚴 when he was in Chi-pin in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>287</sup> After going to some of the states of Central Asia, Buddhahadra eventually came by sea to China and then immediately went to Ch'ang-an because Kumārajīva was there. He and Kumārajīva often discussed points of doctrine, and Buddhahadra had many disciples. However, through some unfortunate incidents, Buddhahadra was expelled from Ch'ang-an by the influential monks who were controlling the government. He and 40-some followers, including the monk Pao-yün 寶雲, went to Lu shan where Hui-yüan, who had tried unsuccessfully to have Buddhahadra's expulsion rescinded, welcomed him like an old friend and asked him to translate sutras. Buddhahadra stayed there over a year and then eventually went to Ch'ien-kang, where he was invited to stay at the famous Tao-ch'ang ssu. He produced several monumental translations: the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* (possibly ca. 412/416-420, perhaps started when he was at Lu shan) and the *Hua-yen ching* from 418 to February 5<sup>th</sup>, 422, when this massive 60 chüan text was put out.

In the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*, a major translation of a "visualization" sutra, the name "Wu-liang shou fo" was used for Amitāyus and "Chi-lo" for the Buddha-land Sukhāvātī (the same term first used by Kumārajīva). In the *Hua-yen ching*, I do not see the usage of Amitābha, but there is Amitāyus,<sup>288</sup> Sukhāvātī as An-lo 安樂,<sup>289</sup> and Avalokiteśvara as Kuan-shih-yin.<sup>290</sup> I found no references to Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

As discussed in detail above, it is widely thought by Japanese scholars that Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün translated the *Hsin Wu-liang-shou ching* (which is believed to be the extant *Wu-liang-shou ching* translation of the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha* and the one now extant in the *Daizōkyō*, (T 360). Records in the CTSCC indicate this text was put out in 421 A.D. (Yung-ch'ü 2<sup>nd</sup> year 永初

<sup>286</sup> For a short notation concerning the death date of Kumārajīva, see Rhie (2002), p. 387 and note 203.

<sup>287</sup> See biography of Buddhahadra in Chapter 7.

<sup>288</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 693c.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 555c, 567b, 616a.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 718a-c.

二年) from the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺 in Chien-k'ang.<sup>291</sup> While the terminology of Kuan-shih-yin for Avalokiteśvara (the characters also used in the Group 6 colophon) were apparently first devised by Kumārajīva and used in his 406 translation of the *Miao fa lien hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*), Buddhahadra's *Hua-yen ching* and the *Wu-liang-shou ching* also use these characters.

For Mahāsthāmaprāpta the characters Ta-shih-chih 大勢至 were used in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360), the same as seen in Chih-ch'ien's translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (223-228), Dharmarakṣa's *Cheng fa-hua ching* (*Lotus Sutra*) translated in 286 A.D., and also in the *Kuan-Wu-liang shou [fo] ching* translated by Kālayāśas ca. 424-442. Further, the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) uses "Wu-liang-shou fo" for Amitāyus (first seen in Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Lotus Sutra* in 286), and so does the Group 6 colophon. But it was not used by Kumārajīva in his translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Smaller Sukhāvativyūha* or the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*; in these translations Kumārajīva used "A-mi-t'o". Further, the *Wu-liang-shou ching* uses both the terms "An-yang kuo" 安養國 (first used by Dharmarakṣa in the *Lotus Sutra*), and "Wu-liang-shou kuo" 無量壽國 for the Buddha-land Sukhāvātī. Kumārajīva appears only to have used "An-lo" or "Chi-lo".

With regard to the description of the two great Bodhisattvas, the *Wu-liang-shou ching* does not contain the lengthy description used in the two early translations (T 362, T 361). It does not describe them except to say that they are the two great Bodhisattvas of the land of Amitābha/Amitāyus and that they are always at the attendance of Amitābha/Amitāyus. It does not provide any special visual identification terms, but basically introduces the names and summarizes a few characteristics. There is a close match with the Group 6 colophons (except for the "Te" 得 in Mahāsthāmaprāpta), but there is no helpful visual description of the two great Bodhisattvas, who are actually barely mentioned and hardly seem to be a significant factor aside from being an identifiable pair, and that they are lauded as "great Bodhisattvas" rather than simply Bodhisattvas.

8) There is, however, a marked change in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*, traditionally said to have been translated between 424-442 in Chien-k'ang by the foreign monk Kālayāśas. This attribution has been studied by a number of Japanese scholars. Fujita Kōtatsu has reasoned for the probability that Kālayāśas was the translator and that the text probably originated ("compiled") in Central Asia (possibly Turfan), but contains many Chinese elements (though probably not composed in China). Other than the date provided by the biographical record in the *Kao-seng chuan* that Kālayāśas was in Chien-k'ang from the "beginning" of the Yüan-chia era 元嘉 (of the [Liu] Sung, 424-442) and died ca. 442, there is no indication of a more specific date for the translation of the *Kuan ching* other than ca. 424-442.

This sutra is significantly different from the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha*. It presents the background for Śākyamuni's teaching of the sutra to Queen Vaidehi and contains the 16 detailed "visualizations" (kuan) of Sukhāvātī, including very specific visual details of the Buddha and the two great Bodhisattvas, both individually and as a triad. It is in this text that we first hear that Avalokiteśvara (called Kuan-shih-yin) has a figure of "a standing transformed Buddha" [Amitābha/Amitāyus is not specifically named] in the crown and that Mahāsthāmaprāpta (called Ta-shih-chih) has a "jeweled bottle" symbol in the crown. These are two identifying marks of these two Bodhisattvas stated in the sutra. However, in the Group 6 figures, neither of the two Bodhisattvas have these symbols in the crown. Though the Group 6 colophons use the same characters (except that the Group 6 colophon has the addition of the

<sup>291</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p. 56; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 11c.

character “Te” 得 at the beginning of Mahāsthāmaprāpta’s name) for the names of all three images as they appear in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*, the Group 6 sculptures do not follow one of the most important visual identifiers of the two great Bodhisattvas. This could be a factor suggesting it is unlikely that the Group 6 images were following the text of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*.

At this juncture, this leaves the *Wu-liang-shou ching* translation of the (Larger) *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* as the most likely text serving as the underlying basis for this sculptural triad of the Group 6 niche. There will be more consideration of this below, after presenting several other related issues, especially with regard to the date of the dedication inscription of Group 6, and further examining the wall paintings associated with Group 6. First, however, we will briefly turn our attention to the possible sources of the representation of Amitābha/Amitāyus and Sukhāvati in the art of India, and then return to our consideration of Group 6 in Chapter 7.

### 3. *Amitābha/Amitāyus and Sukhāvati in the Art of Mathurā and Gandhāra Prior to the Mid-5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.*

Before returning to Group 6 and moving on to analysis of the paintings connected with Group 6, we will first consider the appearance of Amitābha/Amitāyus in the surviving art of the greater Indian area, as known particularly in the art of Mathurā and Gandhāra prior to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. The identification of Amitābha has been a major interest of scholars for many years, yet little headway has been made in understanding the early art of this Buddha. The iconography as well as the dating remains difficult and frequently controversial, not only regarding Amitābha/Amitāyus, but of most Buddha images and triads in this period of Indian, and especially Gandhāran, art. However, some new discoveries and the recent work by a number of scholars merits attention in the context of our study as a comparative base for understanding the Chinese interpretation and importance within the field of early Buddhist art in general. Here only a brief outline of the most salient features and ideas will be presented without addressing the specific problems in detail. It can be noted at the outset that there has always been intense interest among scholars of Buddhist art in India regarding the imagery of Amitābha/Amitāyus and the Buddha-land of Sukhāvati, partially because this image is bound up with clearly Mahāyāna elements and emerging early Mahāyāna imagery, including ideas of the Buddha-lands (Buddhakṣetra) and Bodhisattvas, and even with the germ of esoteric Buddhism (tantric, Vajrayāna, Mantrayāna, etc. Buddhism), all of which came to have had a profound impact in East Asia. Understanding the situation in India (Mathurā and the greater Gandhāra region in particular) in the period ca. 2<sup>nd</sup>-mid 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. will sharpen our understanding of the developments in China and help to judge the role of China in the evolution of Buddhist art of this period around the late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

#### a. *Mathurā Inscribed Amitābha Buddha*

The oldest known image of Amitābha (inscribed) comes from Mathurā. The remains (total measurements 77 x 51 cm) consist of the lower portion of a standing Buddha and its base, the latter with a four-line inscription in Kushana Brāhmī script (Figs. 6.17a, b).<sup>292</sup> The fragment was found at Govindnagar (outskirts of Mathurā) in 1977 and is now in the Government Museum in Mathurā (77.30).<sup>293</sup>

<sup>292</sup> R. C. Sharma, “New Inscriptions from Mathurā,” in D. Srinivasan, *Mathurā, The Cultural Heritage*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 313-314.

<sup>293</sup> A number of images, terracottas, etc. were turned up during clearing for a housing project in Govindnagar on the outskirts of Mathurā. Part of the site was given to the Mathurā Museum for protection and some excavations took place. In 1976 an inscription was found recording a new Buddhist monastery, called the Vīradatta Vihāra. In 1977 some

It was introduced by R. C. Sharma, first and very briefly in 1984, and later enlarged and revised in 1995. Gregory Schopen wrote a detailed analysis of the inscription and assessment of the image's importance in 1987 (later reprinted with additions in 2005), and John Huntington considered the image in an article in 1989.<sup>294</sup>

In Sharma's revised edition (1995), he translated the inscription as follows:

On the 26<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the rainy season in the year 20 (6) on this occasion the image of Amitābha Buddha was installed by Nāgarakṣita, son of Buddhabala, grandson of the merchant Satvaka, and grandson (daughter's son) of the trader Balakīrti (?) for the worship of all Buddhas. Whatsoever merit is in this charity let it be for listening to the Supreme Knowledge of the Buddha.

Gregory Schopen provides a more detailed, meticulous, line-by line, word-by-word analysis of the inscription<sup>295</sup> and translates it to be as follows:

The 26<sup>th</sup> year of the Great King Huviṣka, the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, the 26<sup>th</sup> day. On this day by Nāgarakṣita, the (father) of the trader ..., the grandson of the merchant Balakatta, the (son of Buddhapila), an image of the Blessed One, the Buddha Amitābha was set up for the worship of all *buddhas*. Through this root of merit (may) all living things (obtain) the unexcelled knowledge of a *buddha*.<sup>296</sup>

Taking the date of the first year of Kaniṣka as 127 A.D.,<sup>297</sup> the date of this inscription would correspond to 153 A.D., which is the first year of King Huviṣka of the Kushana Dynasty. Schopen comments: "Two things are immediately clear about our inscription: it contains ... both an unambiguous reference to the Buddha Amitābha and an equally unambiguous and unexpectedly early date." Otherwise, "the earliest known reference to Amitābha in Indian epigraphical sources ... occurred in a seventh-century epigraph from Sāñci."<sup>298</sup>

The broken fragment retains its rectangular, relatively low base containing the four line inscription (one line on the top front and three lines on the front side). Between the rather widely spaced feet (missing above the ankles), is the lower part of an object in relief, now mostly broken off. It is conically shaped with a ribbed surface. The exact identification and meaning of this motif is not clear. From other, more complete surviving examples seen in standing Buddha and/or Bodhisattva statues of the Kushana Mathurā school, of which there are quite a few, including those in Figs. 6.17c-e, it seems to be a support for a bunch of lotus flowers,<sup>299</sup> similar to the bunch of lotus flower held by a

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excavations were done and some regular layers were found. "The site revealed one or two stray pieces after the excavations including a yakṣa carrying a bowl and a pedestal of Amitābha Buddha of Huviṣka's reign." R. C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art: Mathura School*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 88-89 and Fig. 146.

<sup>294</sup> R. C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathura*, Delhi, 1984, Fig. 151; R. C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art: Mathura School*, New Delhi, 1995, Fig. 146 and p. 214; Gregory Schopen, "The Inscription on the Kuṣāna Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India," in G. Schopen, *Fragments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India*, Honolulu, 2005 (reprint with additions and stylistic changes from *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 10.2 (1987), pp. 99-134). John Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teaching of Mahāyāna," in D. Srinivasan (gen. ed.), *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*, New Delhi, 1989, p. 86.

<sup>295</sup> Schopen (2005), pp. 248-258.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>297</sup> The most recent and possibly the most acceptable date for the long-time problem of the date of Kaniṣka, presented by H. Falk, "The Yuga of Sphujiddhvaja and the Era of the Kuṣāṇas," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, Vol. 7 (2001), pp. 121-136.

<sup>298</sup> Schopen (2005), p. 258.

<sup>299</sup> This motif is described by R. C. Sharma concerning the Maholi colossal statue (1984, p. 185, no. (iv) and further discussed on p. 187. In note 57 on p. 187 Sharma notes the comments given to him by Mitterwallner, who suggests "that the object should better be explained as [a] flower basket placed by the devotees." Mitterwallner, in "The Brussels

worshipper in the Shotorak relief in Fig. 6.17f. The famous “Friar Bala Bodhisattva” of year 3 has a lion relief between the legs, but others show the “lotus” motif and include examples up to around the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>300</sup> and examples in the late period where the Buddha wears the saṅghāṭī with both shoulders covered.<sup>301</sup> However, some standing Buddha/Bodhisattva sculpture fragments, such as the year 51=178 A.D. image installed in the “Huviṣka vihāra,” do not have any carved relief motif between the legs.<sup>302</sup> Some Bodhisattva sculptures also have this motif, but not all. This kind of carved relief between the legs of standing Buddhas does not appear in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Gupta standing Buddhas of Mathurā.

The lower part of a rather small standing figure is seen at the outer edge of Amitābha Buddha’s right foot. This figure, called an acolyte by Sharma,<sup>303</sup> is turned slightly towards the Buddha, has bare feet and is wearing a garment whose slightly raised rolled hem can still be seen on his left leg in Fig. 6.17b. This is probably a male figure and probably not a donor, who would most likely be shown kneeling and/or more clothed as in the example dated ca. 220 A.D. in Fig. 6.17e. It could be a Bodhisattva attendant (or possibly a reference to Dharmākara, the progenitor of Amitābha). There does not appear to have been another figure at the Buddha’s left foot, as verified by Sharma, who also recognizes the problem of identity as a Bodhisattva attendant.<sup>304</sup> All that remains on the Buddha’s left is part of the vertical back slab with part of an open lotus in low relief; there is nothing to indicate if there was any figure on or near it. Such individual lotus decorations appear on some other images of this time,<sup>305</sup> and at least one has a tree motif, as seen in Fig. 6.17c. It is somewhat unusual to have an asymmetrical arrangement with a figure on one side and simply an open lotus on the other. The lotus could be an appropriate decoration for any Buddha or Bodhisattva and could have been popular as a motif during a particular period, or it could have specific meaning iconographically, perhaps referring to a certain icon or icons. The fact that Fig. 6.17c clearly has a tree motif suggests that these relief have a specific meaning and may be an identifying mark, perhaps suitable to specific Buddhas. In the case of the fragment with the Amitābha inscription, we can at least have one example that matches the lotus motif with Amitābha by ca. 153 A.D. in Mathurā.

Though regrettably only a fragment, the inscriptional evidence is particularly important. It dates the dedication of an actual image of a standing Amitābha Buddha to 153 A.D., thus clearly indicating the presence of some degree of worship of Amitābha Buddha by that time in Mathurā. This in turn clearly suggests the presence of texts that speak of Amitābha. Because of its date, this fragment stands at present as the earliest known image of Amitābha. Though one could think this could indicate a possible primacy to Mathurā as a site for Amitābha’s origin and development, such an interpretation does not yet seem possible to make, especially in light of the study cited above by Gregory Schopen. However,

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Buddha from Gandhāra of the Year 5” in *Investigating Indian Art*, ed. by Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo, Berlin, 1987, note 57, suggests it is a vase type support indicating the lotus in the waters. S. Quintanilla discusses the lotus in Buddhist and Jaina images at Mathurā as being the symbol of the waters and the link between the mundane and transcendent worlds. S. Quintanilla, *History of Early Sculpture at Mathura, ca. 150 BCE–100 CE*, Leiden, 2007, p. 75.

<sup>300</sup> See Sharma (1995), for the early period: Fig. 84 (year 3=130 A.D.) and Fig. 85; for the middle period: Fig. 93 and Fig. 109 (year 93=220 A.D.).

<sup>301</sup> Sharma (1995), Figs. 113, 114.

<sup>302</sup> Sharma (1995), Fig. 101.

<sup>303</sup> Sharma (1989), p. 314.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>305</sup> For example, a pedestal with inscription and only the remains of the lower part of a standing male image in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay (Acc. No. 2; Hgt. 2’1”), shows a female standing in front of a several large lotus flowers between the feet of the main image and an open lotus carved in shallow relief against the back slab at the right (facing) of the main image’s left foot. Inchang Kim, *The Future Buddha Maitreya, An Iconological Study*, New Delhi, 1997, fig. 33.



it is also possible that during the flourishing period of Huvīṣka the worship of Amitābha appeared in Mathurā or spread to Mathurā from other areas, such as the northwest (Gandhāra) or even from the South. However, such clear, early, Amitābha image evidence is not yet known for either the South or the Gandhāran region.<sup>306</sup>

It is also not clear if this image is reflecting a text or is simply an icon image of Amitābha without pointed, specific reference to any particular text. The tendency is to consider this type of image (a large sculpture) simply as an object of worship and merit rather than a specific reflection of a particular text. If one were, however, to consider the “visual” aspect of Amitābha in the early texts, in standing form it could be that this is Amitābha as “standing before one” (in Chinese the translation can be interpreted as literally “standing” as stated in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (translated into Chinese in 179 A.D.).<sup>307</sup> This image comes at a time only a few years earlier than the first translation of the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* into Chinese by Lokakṣema (T 362, see No. 2a) and before his 179 A.D. translation of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (see above No. 1).

Schopen’s assessment from the inscriptional evidence is that the image is an early Mahāyāna one without relation or overtones of tantric maṇḍalas or the set of dhyāni Buddhas (as suggested by Sharma and quite strongly argued by Huntington), and also without any expression of hope for rebirth in Amitābha’s Buddhafeld Sukhāvati (thus suggesting it is not part of a “cult of Sukhāvati”). Rather, according to Schopen, the inscription contains phrases that link it with early Mahāyāna as well as contain some links with Hinayāna. He particularly analyzes this in regard to the donative formula “May whatever merit there is in this be for the obtaining of the unexcelled knowledge by all living beings,” which “is characteristic of and specific to the Mahāyāna..., although not the same, [it] is almost certainly a forerunner to it or a prototype for it.” He makes the points that in the case of the Govindnagar Amitābha inscription, the formula appears as an integral part of the inscription and is not separated from it as an isolated, independent statement, which is the case in the Gupta period and later Mahāyāna inscriptions, and “reflects the standard usage of the Mahāyāna as a completely independent movement.”<sup>308</sup> He further notes, that in the Govindnagar inscription, this “*annuttaram buddhajñāna*” formula is used in conjunction with another, much older formula, which points very much in another direction. “*Before the annuttaram buddhajñānam* statement our inscription says that the image of Amitābha was set up [sa](rva)buddhapujāye, ‘for the worship of all buddhas.’” This latter formula, according to Schopen, “has absolutely nothing to do with the Mahāyāna and is in fact a recurring element in earlier inscriptions that are explicitly associated with named non-Mahāyāna groups, such as the Sarvāstivādins, the Kāśyapīyas, etc.”<sup>309</sup> Thus the Govindnagar Amitābha inscription “expressed itself half in old and established idioms and half in not yet finished new formulae that would come to characterize not a cult of Amitābha, but the Mahāyāna as a whole; it dictated the production of a new image, but for—in part at least—an old and established purpose.” In this matter he brings out the

<sup>306</sup> Joseph Walser, in his recently published study on Nāgārjuna, discusses the passages in the *Ratnāvali* where Nāgārjuna mentions images of the Buddha in his instructions to a Sātavāhana king who was Nāgārjuna’s patron (probably in the Eastern Deccan). Though the references include “Buddha images sitting on lotuses,” there is not much evidence of Mahāyāna, much less of Amitābha, in the South during the time of Nāgārjuna (which is also difficult to determine, but is suggested as ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century by Walser). J. Walser, *Nāgārjuna in Context, Mahāyāna Buddhism and Early Indian Culture*, New York, 2005, pp. 79-87.

<sup>307</sup> “... so should they reflect on the Buddha standing there like a precious gem placed on beryl 如持珍寶著琉璃上...”; see above section 1).

<sup>308</sup> Schopen (2005), p. 265.

<sup>309</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 265-266 for detailed discussion and examples.



importance of this inscription for its transitional character. He characterizes the image not as revealing popularity for Amitābha, but as the expression of a limited minority at Mathurā with little development, if any, for the next two centuries.<sup>310</sup> He sees the “real significance of the Govindnagar inscription as establishing the presence of the very beginnings of ‘the Mahāyāna as a public movement in the second century C.E. and indicates, by its total isolation and lack of influence, the tenuous, hesitant, and faltering character of those “beginnings.”<sup>311</sup> In this assessment, one could also understand the image to reflect at least some of the characteristics of Amitābha in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra*, translated into Chinese in 179 A.D. These two factors give some credence to a generally similar, individualistic aura to Amitābha without special note of his Buddha-land. Similarly, Amitābha appears as one Buddha named among others in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* and has but a little more description in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*.

b. *Triads of a Seated Buddha with Two Standing Bodhisattvas*

The Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 6 niche is a major example in large size sculpture of a triad composed of a seated dhyānāsana Buddha on a lotus seat wearing the robe with half sling style (as used with the dhyāna mudrā, see Fig. 4.15h) accompanied by two standing Bodhisattvas, each on a lotus pedestal. There is another sculpted niche in Cave 169 with a single dhyānāsana Buddha (Group 3), but not on a lotus seat, and the accompanying attendants are one standing Bodhisattva and a Vajrapāṇi (see Chapter 7). Other sculpture triads with Buddha and Bodhisattvas in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 are composed of a standing Buddha and two standing Bodhisattvas (Groups 17 and 22). Painted triads occur in the thousand Buddha panel of Group 24 (a seated Buddha in abhayā mudrā with two standing Bodhisattvas and a seated dhyānāsana Buddha with two standing monks). There are also the earlier small triads seen in the bronze mirrors of the Western Chin (265-316) and Eastern Chin (317-420) in Figs. 3.22 and 3.23, and some of the small bronze altars also have triads (Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9). Others occur on the three stone steles in Sian (Fig. 5.38a). However, the form with dhyānāsana Buddha seated on a lotus (rather than a lion throne) with two accompanying Bodhisattvas is more difficult to encounter in surviving early Chinese Buddhist art.<sup>312</sup> As discussed below, even in Indian and Gandhāran art it is hard to find a clearly comparable example to the Group 6 niche.

i. Mathurā and Gandhāra

The triad of seated Buddha with two attendants is known from an early period in Mathurā, at least from around the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. in pre-Kaṇiṣka times.<sup>313</sup> This form continues into the period of Kaṇiṣka,<sup>314</sup> where there are a number of well preserved examples.<sup>315</sup> In these, the main seated Buddha

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>312</sup> Perhaps the ornamental lotus in the center of the lion throne in some bronze altars could be interpreted as a lotus throne, but it is just as likely to be a symbolic representation of transcendence and not necessarily indicative of a lotus throne or pedestal.

<sup>313</sup> Sonya Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura, ca. 150 BCE-100 CE*, Leiden and Boston, 2007, pp. 240-242 and fig. 303, which is the upper part of a triad composed of a Buddha in abhayā mudrā and the upper portion of two attendants, each with a fly whisk, currently in the Harvard University Sackler Museum.

<sup>314</sup> In the past few years there has been considerable advance made in uncovering the date for first year of Kaṇiṣka and the chronology of the Kushana dynasty. For example, see articles by Gobl, Cribb, Sims-Williams, etc., in M. Alram and D. Klimburg-Salter (eds.), *Coins, Art, and Chronology*, Wien, 1999. The work by N. Sims-Williams has reasonably established the date for the first year of Kaṇiṣka for 127 A.D. Also see note 297 above.

<sup>315</sup> Sharma (1995), figs. 65 (the “Katra” Buddha), 68, 69, 74, 88 (dated year 32, Buddha with Vajrapāṇi and Padmapāṇi Bodhisattva, holding a bunch of lotuses), and 96 (also with Vajrapāṇi and probably Padmapāṇi).

(in vajrāsana) has the abhayā mudrā with the right hand. Inscriptions identify some of these as Bodhisattva and/or Buddha. The main image is generally taken to be Śākyamuni Buddha and, on some, the two attendants are taken to be Indra and Brahmā. Schopen notes the inscriptions from Mathurā are mostly to Śākyamuni, but there is one with inscription naming Kāśyapa Buddha,<sup>316</sup> which could indicate an interest in the seven Buddhas of the past. Even triads from the late Kushana to the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, which are few in number, do not appear to bear any relation to Amitābha.

The situation in Gandhāra, however, appears to be somewhat different, although there is the well-known example of the figures on the so-called Kaniška reliquary from Shah-jiki-dheri, which is now considered to probably date in the period of Huviška rather than the period of Kaniška.<sup>317</sup> This famous bronze reliquary shows on the lid a Buddha with robe covering both shoulders and the feet, sitting in vajrāsana on a lotus making the abhayā mudrā with the right hand. This Buddha, probably Śākyamuni, is attended by Indra and Brahmā, both standing and both in the añjali mudrā. Also, some early stone reliefs primarily from Swat studied by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw as pre-Kushana or early Kushana, show the seated Buddha (garbed in dhoti and chest scarf) mostly in dhyāna mudrā (but some in abhayā mudrā) seated on a rectangular pedestal. Some examples show the Buddha attended by worshippers, but others show him accompanied by Indra and Brahmā.<sup>318</sup>

The appearance of the seated Buddha triad with two standing attendant Bodhisattvas (rather than Indra and Brahmā) seems to occur relatively late in Gandhāran art, though there is still much debate with regard to dating Gandhāran sculptures.<sup>319</sup> However, studies during the past several decades have made some headway in the classification and identification of the images in at least some of the triad configurations. Alfred Foucher considered these Gandhāran triad images, most of which show the Buddha in the dharmachakra mudrā and seated in vajrāsana on a lotus, as the representation of the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī. He extended the simple triad to include the triads such as those seen in the more complex steles from Gandhāra as well (more on this below).<sup>320</sup> Since then scholars have been reassessing this theory and most have rejected it, though these complex (“composite”) steles are still often referred to as the “Śrāvastī triads.” The smaller triads may have been personal images, perhaps often used in the niche in a monk’s room rather than for a large shrine or altar.

In his 1991 dissertation on the Śrāvastī Miracle and its art forms, Juhyung Rhi presented a listing of the 71 examples of Gandhāran sculpture in schist with the seated Buddha/two standing Bodhisattvas triad (some with more than three figures, such as those including Indra and Brahmā in addition to two accompanying Bodhisattva). Most of those whose find spot is known came from Mound C at Sahrī Bahlōl (16 examples) in the Peshawar valley.<sup>321</sup> Takht-i-Bāhī had the second largest number (10), and 28 were of unknown find spot. According to the recent study of Gandhāran monasteries by Kurt

<sup>316</sup> Sharma (1995), fig. 149.

<sup>317</sup> E. Errington, “Numismatic Evidence for Dating the Buddhist Remains of Gandhāra,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, Vol. 6, 1999/2000, p. 197.

<sup>318</sup> J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, “New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image,” in *South Asian Archaeology* 1979, ed. by H. Hartel, Berlin, 1981, pp. figs. 6, 7, 18, 19 and 13.

<sup>319</sup> Soper has written some ideas on the origins of the triad related to ideas from the early mid-East on the pair as rescuers, etc., such as seen in Roman and Hellenistic art. Soper (1959), pp. 153-155.

<sup>320</sup> A. Foucher, “The Great Miracle at Śrāvastī,” in *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*, translated by L. A. Thomas and F. W. Thomas, New Delhi, 1994 (original, Paris, 1917), see especially pp. 169-178.

<sup>321</sup> J. Rhi, *Gandhāran Images of the “Śrāvastī Miracle”: An Iconographic Reassessment*, Berkeley, CA, 1991, pp. 192 and 197-202.

Behrendt, judging from his assessments of the architectural record of Gandhāra, the sculpted triad in stone appears in late phase III of his classification, which would date them to the 4<sup>th</sup> century or possibly early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>322</sup> The well-known example (with two Bodhisattvas, Brahmā and Indra) with a Kharoṣṭhī inscription of year 5 (of an unknown era) in the Marteau collection in Brussels (Fig. 6.18), has been studied by a number of scholars since it was first introduced in 1973 by J. C. Harle, who dated it to the period of Kaniṣka.<sup>323</sup> Subsequently, others have offered datings which cover the whole gamut from the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. In the substantial article by G. v. Mitterwallner on this Brussels image,<sup>324</sup> she dates this controversial triad to the Hūṇa Era of Kīṃgila, which would place the sculpture to ca. mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the major features of the triad cited to substantiate her historical assessment for dating the image to ca. mid 5<sup>th</sup> century include the following:

- 1) there are two Bodhisattvas as well as Brahmā and Indra (early groups had only Brahmā and Indra);
- 2) the Avalokiteśvara figure has a seated Buddha in the crown (a feature not seen in earlier examples prior to the period of late in the reign of Kaniṣka II or early years of Vāsiṣka (in her estimation, ca. 260's);<sup>325</sup>
- 3) Buddha wears the robes with one shoulder bare ("Indianized manner") and both feet are uncovered by the upper robe (she sees this as being a late phenomenon, presumably later than ca. 408, the date which she uses for the Mamane Dheri Buddha of year 89 which still has both feet covered);<sup>326</sup>
- 4) the form of the dharmachakra mudrā made by the Buddha with thumb, index and middle of the left hand touching the little finger of the right hand she assess to be a late phenomenon. That is, the right hand does not firmly clasp the left hand in such a way that the left hand is almost completely covered by the right hand, as seen in relatively early Gandhāran images and also in images from Nāgārjunakoṇḍā (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century). She notes that the earliest Gandhāran form of Buddha preaching does not use the dharmachakra mudrā, but shows his right hand touching a wheel. The earliest examples of the dharmachakra mudrā for the Buddha appear in several images from Mathurā, one ca. 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and may have been adopted, according to her theory, from the teaching gesture used by earlier Maitreya images, which used the right hand firmly clasping the left, as seen in images of Maitreya from Shotorak (Afghanistan). The dharmachakra mudrā was further developed by the artists of the Sārnāth school as used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, where the left hand has slipped down from the right hand, as compared with examples of the Maitreya images from Shotorak;<sup>327</sup>

<sup>322</sup> K. Behrendt, *The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*, Leiden and Boston, 2004, pp. 222-223, 301.

<sup>323</sup> J. C. Harle, "A Hitherto Unknown Dated Sculpture from Gandhāra: A Preliminary Report," *South Asian Archaeology* 1973, ed. by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw and J. M. Ubagha, Leiden, 1974, pp. 128-135.

<sup>324</sup> G. v. Mitterwallner, "The Brussels Buddha from Gandhāra of the Year 5," in *Investigating Indian Art*, ed. by Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo, Berlin, 1987, pp. 213-247.

<sup>325</sup> In our study above on the Amitābha texts, it was noted that the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* is the first or earliest text translated into Chinese known to mention that Avalokiteśvara wears the image of Amitābha in the crown (or on the head). The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* was probably translated by Kālayaśas close to ca. 425 (i.e., early in the Yüan-chia era: 424-442 A.D.). (See above section II.A.2.c, no. 17).

<sup>326</sup> Mitterwallner (1987), pp. 217-218.

<sup>327</sup> Mitterwallner (1987), pp. 218-219.

- 5) the lotus seat for the “historical” Buddha Śākyamuni was already known at the time of the early Kushana kings. She cites two examples from Mathurā: one with lotus turned towards the viewer with a slab on top. The Buddha’s feet are on the slab, but the toes grasp the rim of the seed pod and the petals of the lotus are turned upwards. Around the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the Buddha is seated on the seed capsule of an inverted lotus with all its petals turned downward. Only in the 5<sup>th</sup> century do the petals turn both upward and downward, as in the Brussels example, and as seen in some coins of two early Gupta kings, including those of Chandragupta II (375-414?);<sup>328</sup>
- 6) usage of much perforation of the stele in the tree and lotus petals is a late feature;
- 7) Brahmā and Indra are without halos and show more advanced hair style and jewelry than seen in the “Kaniṣka reliquary”;<sup>329</sup>
- 8) the hand turned towards the shoulder in the Maitreya image is a later gesture than the abhayā mudrā;
- 9) delicacy of the carving suggests a style commensurate with Gupta;
- 10) the Brussels relief is a flat slab without a tenon on the bottom and both the Brussels image as well as the Mamane Dheri relief (with Gupta Era date of ca. 408 according to K. Khandalavala)<sup>330</sup> “belong to the category of devotional reliefs which seem to have been embedded in niches of walls of Buddhist structures.”<sup>331</sup>

Concerning the identification of the Buddha and two standing Bodhisattvas in these Gandhāran “triads” a general consensus seems to be forming among scholars. For example, Miyaji Akira, in his 1992 study of particular types of iconography in Gandhāran art that includes a chapter on the triad, bases his conclusions on the study of 40 examples of Gandhāran stone sculptures of the triad form (some of which also include other, more minor, attendants, such as Indra and Brahmā).<sup>332</sup> He found that 19 out of the 40 were consistent in being composed of: 1) a Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā seated cross-legged on a lotus pedestal wearing his robe with the right shoulder bared; 2) one standing attendant Bodhisattva (Miyaji’s “A” type) with hair in the looped bun or uṣṇīṣa-like bun (jaṭāmukuta) on top of the head, holding a water bottle in the left hand, and with the right hand held up in front of the shoulder in either the abhayā mudrā or with the palm bent facing the chest; and 3) the other standing attendant Bodhisattva (Miyaji’s “B” type) wearing a turban-crown, holding a lotus flower or bud or a garland of flowers with the left hand, and having the right hand in the abhayā mudrā (but never holding the palm bent inward facing the chest as the “A” type Bodhisattva), or in the “contemplative” gesture (hand held to cheek), or holding a garland or open lotus flower. He identified these two Bodhisattvas as Maitreya (type “A”) and Avalokiteśvara (type “B”) respectively.<sup>333</sup> He laid out a number of carefully observed reasons for this identification, some of which concur with generally known assessments from previous scholar’s publications. Further, he presents an interesting theory of the possible

<sup>328</sup> Mitterwallner (1987), pp. 219-220.

<sup>329</sup> Mitterwallner (1987), p. 215.

<sup>330</sup> The Mamane-Dheri relief of the Indraśāila Cave in the Peshawar Museum is dated to the year 89, which is taken by Karl Khandalavala as dating to the Gupta era, hence 408 A.D. See K. Khandalavala, “The Five Dated Gandhāra School Sculptures and Their Stylistic Implications,” in *Indian Epigraphy—Its Bearing on the History of Art*, ed. by F. Asher and G.S. Gai, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 66-69.

<sup>331</sup> Von Mitterwallner (1987), p. 214.

<sup>332</sup> A. Miyaji, *Nehan to Miroku no zuzōgaku: Indo kara Chūō Ajia e*, Tokyo, 1992, pp. 245-280.

<sup>333</sup> Miyaji (1992), pp. 247-254.

development of aspects of each Bodhisattva in this pair from different reliefs of Siddhārtha in early Gandhāran sculpture.<sup>334</sup>

Regarding the identity of the main seated Buddha of these triads, Miyaji finally concludes that this Buddha is most likely to be Śākyamuni, largely because in some of the triad reliefs, in addition to Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, there are the figures of Brahmā and Indra, who are most closely associated with Śākyamuni.<sup>335</sup> It should be pointed out that these Gandhāran triads almost always have the Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal, with his robe baring the right shoulder, and hands held in the dharmachakra mudrā. Cases where the main seated Buddha (on a lotus pedestal) is not in the dharmachakra mudrā, but makes either the abhaya mudrā or the dhyāna mudrā, are exceedingly rare in the corpus of surviving Gandhāran art.

Miyaji offers an interesting interpretation of this kind of triad that proceeds from his observations regarding the triads that include Indra and Brahmā as minor figures (making five figures all together) in terms of the Indian conception from ancient India of Brahmā (the original god), who is associated with the Brahmin class, and Indra (king of the gods), who is associated with the Kṣatriya (ruling) class. He interprets Brahmā as representing the transcendent or godly, and Indra as pointing to the secular or worldly. Further, the Brahma/Brahmin link represents the lineage of transcendent knowledge while the Indra/Kṣatriya link represents the line of kingly activity. He notes that this pair of Brahmā and Indra appeared in the early Buddha triads of Śākyamuni Buddha/Bodhisattva in Mathurā and he also sees this dual concept as informing the selection and visual appearance of the Gandhāra triad of the form noted above. Thus Maitreya has the attributes that link with the Brahma/Brahmin/transcendent knowledge lineage, and Avalokiteśvara has the attributes that link to the Indra/Kṣatriya/kingly activities lineage.<sup>336</sup> Importantly, Miyaji specifically states that there does not appear to be any reference to a specific text for this triad form; rather, it is mainly a Mahāyāna interpretation of an ideal icon that is a religious statement signifying the lineage of Brahmā/Brahmin and Indra/Kṣatriya or, more universally speaking, in terms of Mahāyāna Buddhism, of knowledge and activity.<sup>337</sup>

I would like to reinforce the interpretation that the Buddhist sense might strongly imply the Bodhisattvas as representing wisdom and compassion, the two clear elements of Mahāyāna, which was sufficiently articulated in early Mahāyāna writings of the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra schools by Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga respectively. Even though the dates of these two masters are not settled, the ideas of both would have been current by the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century and may have been utilized in these triads of Gandhāra, if Miyaji's interpretation bears weight.

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<sup>334</sup> From his study of narrative reliefs of Siddhārtha in Gandhāran art, he notes that the turban-crown (associated with kings) is associated with Siddhārtha in scenes prior to his renunciation, and that the form with jaṭāmukuta (hair in a knot on the head) and without a crown occurs in reliefs of Siddhārtha from the scenes of the period surrounding his renunciation. So the germ of the two forms of Bodhisattvas as represented by the manner of headdress (and also with the objects being held) corresponds to that of the Type A Bodhisattva (Maitreya) in terms of the lack of crown and holding a water bottle and is found in reliefs where the idea of renunciation and seeking of bodhi occurs, and the Type B Bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara) reflects the attributes seen in reliefs of Siddhārtha just prior to the actual renunciation where he wears a turban-crown and holds a lotus and is raising the mind of compassion. Miyaji explains this interesting thesis in great detail in terms of actual objects of Gandhāran art. Miyaji (1992), pp. 265-267.

<sup>335</sup> Miyaji (1992), p. 271.

<sup>336</sup> Miyaji (1992), p. 269.

<sup>337</sup> Miyaji (1992), p. 265.



There are other Bodhisattva combinations among the 40 examples given by Miyaji, but usually Maitreya is one of them.<sup>338</sup> In some cases the other Bodhisattva does not appear to be Avalokiteśvara, but can sometimes be identified as Siddhārtha (with turban-crown and left hand on the hip, but without holding any object in either hand). Among the 40 images studied by Miyaji, two are examples of Maitreya with Siddhārtha.<sup>339</sup> However, the combination of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara had 19 examples. He sees this latter combination as the main one in the Gandhāran stone triad with Śākyamuni Buddha. He notes that this kind even remained popular in the Gupta and Pala art of later times in central India, though he admits that this triad could have “changed to Amitābha in Gandhāra”.<sup>340</sup> He does not see that the Maitreya figure in the early triads of the Gandhāra region could be interpreted as Mahāsthāmaprāpta, simply because the iconography of Maitreya in Gandhāra seems so clearly established that it would not be used for another Bodhisattva.<sup>341</sup>

One controversial example was considered by several scholars some years ago to be an inscribed Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara (the left attendant Bodhisattva in contemplative posture and holding a lotus) with the right attendant missing. However, the reading of the inscription as Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara was found to be unsupportable by Gregory Schopen and Richard Solomon, so the triad as an example of an Amitābha triad is probably not reliable.<sup>342</sup> At present, then, a triad that can be shown to be Amitābha with the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvātī cannot yet be identified with certainty among the Gandhāran remains of triad configurations.

### c. *Triads within Complex Stele Scenes*

The problem of identification is acutely difficult with respect to the complex stone stele scenes with many figures, often including a large main Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā seated in vajrāsana on a lotus and accompanied by two main attendant Bodhisattvas and multiple other figures. These complex steles appear to be a product also of the late phases of Gandhāran art. They, like the triads discussed above, are also placed by Kurt Behrendt in the late Phase III or Phase IV period (i.e., 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries) according to his study of the architectural remains. Further, he shows that these large steles were placed in niches in monasteries (vihāra) rather than being part of the sacred area with the stupa and image shrines.<sup>343</sup> Though Foucher identified these complex steles as depicting the Śrāvastī Miracle,<sup>344</sup> others, such as John Rosenfield, doubted the identification and suggested that they are likely to be related to early Mahāyāna sutras, such as the *Samādhinirmocana Sūtra*, or the *Mahāprajñāpāmitā Śāstra* or the *Lotus Sutra*, rather than the depiction of the narrative episodes of the Miracles as explained in Chapter XII of the *Divyāvadāna*, as favored by Foucher. “Rather than label these scenes the Miracle of Śrāvastī, it seems less misleading to call them a Buddhist theophany. Although they are fundamentally allied to Mahāyāna thinking, it is impossible, according to Alfred

<sup>338</sup> We can note that Maitreya appears in the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha*, but not as one of the two great Bodhisattvas who always attend Amitābha/Amitāyus.

<sup>339</sup> Nos. 3 and 5 in table of the 40 images: Miyaji (1992), pp. 278–279.

<sup>340</sup> Miyaji (1992), p. 273.

<sup>341</sup> Miyaji (1992), p. 173.

<sup>342</sup> R. Salomon and G. Schopen, “On an Alleged Reference to Amitābha in a Kharoṣṭi Inscription on a Gandhāran Relief,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 25, Nos. 1–2 (2002), pp. 3–31. Also see Juhyung Rhi, “Bodhisattvas in Gandhāran Art: An Aspect of Mahāyāna in Gandhāran Buddhism,” in *Gandhāran Buddhism, Archaeology, Art, Texts*, ed. by Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt, Vancouver and Toronto, 2006, p. 169.

<sup>343</sup> K. Behrendt, *The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*, Leiden, 2004, pp. 171–174.

<sup>344</sup> A. Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central Asian Archaeology*, trans. by L. A. Thomas, revised ed. New Delhi, 1994, (1994), pp. 147–184.



Foucher, to delimit the hard boundary line between the arts of the two Vehicles at this moment in history which seems to be the watershed between them.”<sup>345</sup> In a more recent article, Rosenfield still sees the situation in this way: “In the current state of knowledge, it seems prudent to assume that during the Kuṣāṇa period the great majority of Buddhist sculptures from the empire still belonged to Early Buddhist traditions but reflect, in varying degrees, elements of Mahāyāna thought. A few, like the Mohammad Nāri stele, unquestionably embody generic Mahāyāna ideals.”<sup>346</sup>

i. Mohammad Nāri (larger) Stele: Problems of Identification

John Huntington in 1980 attempted to show the famous Mohammad Nāri stele (Fig. 6.19) in the Lahore Museum to be a representation of Sukhāvati.<sup>347</sup> He made some associations with the *Larger Sukhāvativyūha* (using the Kern translation of a Sanskrit text), but was unable to identify the two great Bodhisattvas with any surety. Notable among his observations are the following identifications:

- 1) the panel of the Buddha (upper right below the dhyānāsana Buddha with 8 emanations) seated beneath a tree with his right hand gesturing outward and looking at a kneeling monk probably represents the Buddha Śākyamuni offering the display of Amitābha’s Pure Land to Ānanda, as stated in the text. The presence of Vajrapāṇi helps to identify the Buddha as Śākyamuni;<sup>348</sup>
- 2) the dhyānāsana Buddhas at the two upper corners, each with eight standing Buddha emanations are not the Śrāvastī Miracle, but represent the emanations of the Buddha (lotus-born Buddhas) that emanate to all directions;<sup>349</sup>
- 3) depictions of the various Bodhisattvas of the Pure Land (he suggests 12 groups shown);
- 4) the central Buddha sits on a lotus supported by a stalk that could represent a jeweled tower (as described in the text);
- 5) the dharmacakra mudrā suggests Amitābha’s continuous teaching;
- 6) the presence of the waters at the bottom, including birds;
- 7) the presence of a male and female donor, both probably wishing to be reborn in the Pure Land.

Huntington suggests a date of 4<sup>th</sup> century for this stele.<sup>350</sup> There has been some resistance to accepting Huntington’s identification. Juhyung Rhi generally discounts the identification specifically to Sukhāvati from the points laid out by Huntington.<sup>351</sup> Miyaji admits the difficulties of identification, but he judges the identity more likely to be a scene such as the miraculous opening prologue of the *Lotus Sūtra* with the light from the Buddha’s ūrṇā shining across myriad Buddha lands and lighting up the beings there.<sup>352</sup> Kurt Behrendt has placed this and other large, complex stone image steles, in

<sup>345</sup> J. Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, Berkeley, 1967, pp. 234-238, quote on p. 238.

<sup>346</sup> J. Rosenfield, “Prologue: Some Debating Points on Gandhāran Buddhism and Kuṣāṇa History,” in Brancaccio and Behrendt (2006), p. 24.

<sup>347</sup> John Huntington, “A Gandhāran Image of Amitāyus’ Sukhāvati,” in *Annali*, Istituto Orientale di Napoli, Vol. 40 (N.S. XXX), 1980, pp. 651-672.

<sup>348</sup> Huntington (1980), pp. 658-659.

<sup>349</sup> Huntington (1980), pp. 659-660.

<sup>350</sup> Huntington (1980), p. 654.

<sup>351</sup> J. Rhi (1991), pp. 130-140.

<sup>352</sup> Miyaji (1992), pp. 333-334. He admits that this stele, and others like it, do not quite correspond to the Śrāvastī Miracle. One reason being that these steles do not show Buddha making quite a number of transformation Buddhas. Rather, he appears to agree with Rosenfield that there is a closer relation to the Buddha miracles in Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Lotus Sūtra*, which begin with the Buddha entering heroic samādhi.

his Late Phase III to Early Phase IV period (i.e., second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to early 5<sup>th</sup> century). He does, however, retain Foucher's identification as the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī.<sup>353</sup> As yet, the iconography of this group of more than a dozen such complex steles remains unresolved. It is likely that these steles are a number of individually different representations, probably of the Mahāyāna variety, as many are now suggesting.

Juhyung Rhi also attempts to discern the sectarian affiliation that may have produced the kind of art of the complex steles like the Mohammad Nāri example. He notes that the Dharmaguptakas appear close to Mahāyāna and may have occupied Jamāl Garhī monastery site in the Peshawar area of Gandhāra. The Kāśyapīyas, another sect that may have Mahāyāna leanings, may have been at Takht-i-Bāhī, and the monasteries of Rohi and Bhiḍa may have been Mahāyāna, judging from the account of Fa-hsien. Nevertheless, this is as yet very tenuous. He concludes: "The 'preaching Buddha' type, an artistic convention created during the middle of the third century A.D. as an alternative to independent statues, developed as a dominant form in votive carvings in the late phase of Gandhāran art, centered on monasteries at Takht-i-Bāhī, Sahri-Bahlōl and Loṛiyān-Tāngai. The imagery of the 'preaching Buddha' and the 'multiplication' was predominantly based on Mahāyāna ideas. These images eloquently testify to the active presence of Mahāyānists within these monasteries affiliated to traditional schools."<sup>354</sup>

ii. A stele in the Peshawar Museum: Possible Sukhāvati with Amitābha and the Two Great Bodhisattvas  
The stone relief stele in Figs. 6.20a-j may possibly represent Amitābha in Sukhāvati. The stele is currently in the Peshawar Museum and has not, as far as I know, been studied or identified.<sup>355</sup> I do not at present have any data on the stele other than the photos we took of it in the summer of 1975. Though a detailed study is not presented here, I think it is useful to put out this relief because of several factors that seem to me to point to an identification of Amitābha and the two great Bodhisattvas in a scene of Sukhāvati in a large relief that can be suggested to date ca. 400 A.D. Further, it has several pertinent factors in relation to the Group 6 dated Amitāyus niche in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu.

The Buddha, much larger in scale than other figures in the stele, sits in the center on a multi-tiered lotus seat (Figs. 6.20a, b). His hands, though largely broken, can be seen to have been in the dharmachakra mudrā probably of the developed style.<sup>356</sup> His right shoulder is bare and both feet are covered by the saṅghātī in a particularly beautiful expression of limpid drapery rarely seen portrayed with such exceptional skill. The drapery depiction has the beauty of the classic Gandhāran idiom with strength and delicacy, but it is not as elaborate and subtle as the fully developed stucco styles as seen, for example, in the Mohrā Morādu images (Figs. 8.8b), probably dating ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century (see Chapter 8), though this Peshawar Museum stone image is not far removed in style. The lotus pedestal is one of the most gorgeous in Gandhāran art: portrayed in a generously full, globular shape densely covered with many levels of petals that are individually formed with curved, smooth, soft tactile surfaces and thin petals with deep undercutting (Figs. 6.20b, 6.20i). The Buddha's face is rather long and taut; the well-defined individual curls of his hair are quite large. There is a circular head halo and above are the broken remains obviously of a jewel tree canopy.

<sup>353</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 172-174.

<sup>354</sup> Rhi (1991), p. 185.

<sup>355</sup> It is published in Kurita (1988 and 2003), I, fig. 402, and noted by Miyaji (1992), p. 335 as being similar to the Mohammad Nāri stele.

<sup>356</sup> The dharmachakra mudrā seems to appear in Mathurā sculpture around the 4<sup>th</sup> (late 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 4<sup>th</sup>) century. See Sharma (1984), fig. 133. In Gandhāra it is difficult to pinpoint the period, but it is generally considered to be relatively late and to undergo several developments, as discussed by Mittenwallner (1987), pp. 218-219.

The figures closest to the Buddha are seated or standing on lotus pedestals. At the Buddha's head level is a small pair of figures on each side: each has a head halo and either pays respect (*añjali mudrā*) or holds offerings (floral garland). These figures could be reborn beings. At shoulder level on each side (the one on the Buddha's left is better preserved) is a kneeling figure on a large lotus whose pod projects like a platform above the encircling tilted rows of petals (Fig. 6.20c). These could also be reborn beings, perhaps of a higher order than the two smaller pairs above. Though these images are located above the Buddha rather than in the waters below as seen in later representations of the reborn beings in Amitābha's land, this could be an early representation that was not standardized in later art.

Most important are the two standing Bodhisattvas, one on each side of and near to the Buddha at chest level. These two are the only standing images in the stele and are slightly larger in scale than the seated images. Both are fortunately sufficiently preserved despite some breakage. They each stand on a circular lotus pedestal. Behind the shoulder of each on the side next to the Buddha is a long-stalked lotus flower. Part of the stalk appears to hold the lotus of the "reborn being" near the Buddha's shoulder, but there is a partly open bud that is close to the shoulder of each of these two standing Bodhisattvas. It is hard to determine whether or not the two Bodhisattvas were holding the lotus stalk, but even if they were not, it is nevertheless nearby and somehow associated with these two standing Bodhisattvas. Such a lotus blossom does not occur with any of the other Bodhisattva figures in the stele (Figs. 6.20b, d, e).<sup>357</sup>

These two standing Bodhisattvas are presented as powerfully formed in the best of Gandhāran style naturalism. Both are somewhat similar, but there is one interesting distinction that is noteworthy: the Bodhisattva at the Buddha's right wears a shawl that is spread out over the body and left shoulder, covering most of the upper torso (Fig. 6.20d). This is similar to the right Bodhisattva of the Group 6 triad in Cave 169 (Fig. 6.14b), the Bodhisattva who is named by inscription as Kuan-shih-yin (*Avalokiteśvara*). The left Bodhisattva in the stele also has a shawl worn over the left shoulder, though it is not spread out over the body (Fig. 6.20e), but rather drops low to reveal the naked upper body in its full muscular detail. Similarly, the left Bodhisattva of the Group 6 triad, inscribed as Te-ta-shih-chih (*Mahāsthāmaprāpta*) has a bared upper chest (Figs. 6.15a, b). This slight difference corresponds to the mode of presentation in the Group 6 inscribed and dated triad. Both Bodhisattvas in the Gandhāran relief appear to hold a long strip of cloth that droops and slightly flutters in front (better seen in the Bodhisattva at Buddha's right in Fig. 6.20d). This cloth, as far as can be judged considering the broken condition, is probably held in both hands of each Bodhisattva. (It is not clear whether or not at the same time these two figures may also have been holding the stalk of the lotus that is seen behind each one). Both Bodhisattvas have circular head halos, but the heads are unfortunately largely broken.

Above the left shoulder of the left Bodhisattva in the stele is a scene showing a Buddha seated on a rectangular pedestal with a grass mat. This pedestal is placed on a rocky ledge and there is a tree canopy above (Fig. 6.20e, f). His right hand, though broken, seems to have been gesturing toward the central Buddha. Two other figures, both considerably broken, appear at this Buddha's left, the upper one perhaps holding a vajra and the lower one definitely kneeling. This scene is very similar to one in the Mohammad Nāri stele (Fig. 6.19) which is better preserved (on the upper right on the row just below the top row) and which Huntington first identified as the Buddha Śākyamuni revealing the scene of Sukhāvati with Amitābha/Amitāyus as written in the *Sukhāvatiyūha Sūtra*.<sup>358</sup> Huntington identified

<sup>357</sup> The remains of the lotus flower appears above the left shoulder of the right Bodhisattva in Fig. 6.20d. Though it is broken, it is clearly evident.

<sup>358</sup> Huntington (1980), pp. 658-659.

the Vajrapāṇi (which clearly then identifies the Buddha as Śākyamuni) and the other figure as the monk Ānanda, to whom Śākyamuni, according to the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, was explaining and showing Amitābha's Buddha land.<sup>359</sup> This is certainly one plausible identification for the Peshawar Museum relief. The indication that the Peshawar Museum stele is Sukhāvati rather than the Buddha land of another Buddha, such as Akṣobhya, is the clear and important presence of the two standing Bodhisattvas next to the Buddha. It is the *Sukhāvativyūha* that names and emphasizes the two great Bodhisattvas of Amitābha's Buddha land, a factor not seen with regard to other Buddha-lands in the texts of this time, including that of Akṣobhya. It is interesting to note that in the Peshawar Museum stele this smaller seated Buddha, the only other Buddha in the scene, has a position at the head level of the main Buddha, and the rocky ledge indicates our own world, outside of the Buddha-land being shown, which has no rocks.

Other Bodhisattva figures in the stele appear in individual shrines; some are in the teaching mudrā, some are seated dhyānāsana on pedestals or seated cross-ankled on a rattan stool or chair, some turn towards the teaching Buddha, and some appear to be in discussion together (lower left corner, Fig. 6.20j). At the bottom right, one Bodhisattva touches a lotus petal on the Buddha's pedestal with the right hand and another one with his foot (Fig. 6.20i). Flanking the stalk of the Buddha's lotus pedestal are the half torsos of two figures on each side. Three survive, but one is broken. One of the three appears to be a female. The two outermost figures, both male, both appear to hold a lotus in their outstretched hand in a gesture similar to the outermost male figures flanking the stalk of the Buddha's lotus pedestal in the Mohammad Nāri stele (Fig. 6.19). Their identity is not clear.<sup>360</sup> The base at the bottom is broken, as is the front surface of the stalk of the Buddha's lotus pedestal, but it is likely that there was a portrayal of water at the bottom, perhaps similar to the Mohammad Nāri stele, which, however, is more elaborate in general compared with the Peshawar Museum stele.

The two main Bodhisattvas in the Peshawar Museum stele would appear to match the descriptions of the two great Bodhisattvas as seen in the two early translations into Chinese of the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, namely, the *A-mi-t'o san-yeh san fo sa lou fo t'an kuo tu jen tao ching* 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經 and the *Wu-liang-ch'ing-ching p'ing-teng-chüeh ching* 無量清淨平等覺經 (see above 2)a and b for discussion of translation data). In both of these early translations (probably ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century respectively), the two great Bodhisattvas are given much more description than in the later translation, the *Wu-liang-shou ching* 無量壽經 (probably translated ca. 421), which basically only mentions their names. In the two early texts, there are several specific points of interest to be made:

<sup>359</sup> The text of the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* as translated by L. Gomez from the Sanskrit, describes this scene, in which Śākyamuni is speaking to Ānanda as follows: "... These are in brief, Ananda, the qualities of the bodhisattvas mahasattvas inhabiting that buddha-field ... And now, Ananda, stand up and face west. Scatter flowers in that direction, and, holding your hands together, prostrate yourself in that direction. For that is the direction where that Blessed One Amitabha, the Tathagata, Arhat, perfect and full Buddha, remains, continues, lives on, teaching the Dharma ... When this had been said, the revered Ananda said this to the Blessed One: 'I wish to see that Blessed One, Amitabha, Amitaprabha, Amitayus, the Tathagata, Arhat, perfect and full buddha, and those bodhisattvas mahasattvas, who have planted the roots of merit under many hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of buddhas' ... Then, no sooner had the reverend Ananda said these words, than Amitabha, the tathagata, Arhat, perfect and full Buddha, sent a ray of light from the palm of his hand, and this ray was so bright that even buddha-fields a hundred thousand million buddha-fields away were filled with great splendor ..." Luis Gomez, *Land of Bliss, the Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light*, Honolulu, 1996, p. 102 (nos. 121-124).

<sup>360</sup> See Huntington (1980), pp. 670-671 for a discussion concerning the similar figures of the Mohammad Nari stele.

- 1) The two “most honorable Bodhisattvas always sit at the left and right side of the Buddha, attending to the correct expounding. The Buddha is always sitting together with these two Bodhisattvas facing (opposite) discussing the matters of the past, future and present in the eight directions, zenith and nadir.”
- 2) When the two Bodhisattvas are named, the name of Avalokiteśvara is mentioned first, followed by Mahāsthāmaprāpta: “One Bodhisattva’s name is Ho-lou-hsüan 蓋樓亘 and the other Bodhisattva’s name is Ma-ho-na-po 摩訶那鉢. [They are] first in brilliant wisdom. On the head of each the brilliant light flames shine always, greatly shining in other directions [to] one thousand Sumeru mountain Buddha countries ...”
- 3) It does not seem possible to distinguish one Bodhisattva from the other, except that Avalokiteśvara will become the master of Sukhāvati after Amitāyus, and then Mahāsthāmaprāpta will follow as the next Buddha master of Sukhāvati. In the later text, the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* 觀無量壽佛經 (also known as the *Kuan ching*, probably translated into Chinese ca. 424-442), it is said that Avalokiteśvara is at the Buddha’s left and Mahāsthāmaprāpta is at the Buddha’s right. In the case of the Peshawar Museum stele, it does not seem possible to determine, especially since the heads are largely broken and the distinguishing mark of the Buddha image for Avalokiteśvara and the water vessel for Mahāsthāmaprāpta that is noted in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (but not in the earlier texts), cannot be determined. It can be noted, however, that in the Group 6 triad, which has the names inscribed, Avalokiteśvara appears at Buddha’s right (and wears the shawl spread across and covering the chest) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta is at the Buddha’s left. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the sculpted images in the Group 6 niche do not appear to follow or be aware of the descriptions in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* on several accounts.
- 4) Because of the similarity in the drapery mode between the two main Bodhisattvas in the Peshawar Museum stele and those in the Group 6 inscribed triad, we can tentatively suggest that the right attendant is Avalokiteśvara and the left attendant is Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

Several other specific features can be pointed out which are of interest with respect to the dating of the Peshawar Museum stele to ca. 400 and to the comparative assessment with respect to the Group 6 sculptures.

- 1) The Amitāyus of Group 6 triad is seated on a lotus seat (not as large as the one in the stele, but it nevertheless iconographically coincides) and the two Bodhisattvas in the Group 6 triad also stand on lotus pedestals as do the two standing Bodhisattvas of the Peshawar Museum stele.
- 2) The rattan chair of the Bodhisattvas in Figs. 6.20e, f, h is similar to the chair backing seen on the Contemplative Bodhisattva of Group 16 in Cave 169 of ca. 400 A.D. (Fig. 4.40) and also with the Gandhāran sculpture in the Matsuoka Museum in Tokyo in Fig. 4.44, which may date close to the time of this Peshawar Museum stele. Most rattan stools or seats do not have that backing, but these three examples seem to indicate a usage sometime around 400 A.D. in both Gandhāra and Cave 169.
- 3) The fact that the Buddha of the Peshawar Museum stele is shown in the dharmachakra mudrā seems to be following the description of Amitābha as teaching. This is different from the (inscribed) Amitāyus image in the Group 6 triad, who is shown in dhyānā mudrā, possibly indicating elements that are being used to distinguish the two forms of Amitābha/Amitāyus in early 5<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist art.



- 4) The manner of portraying the dhyāna mudrā in some of the seated Bodhisattvas in the Peshawar Museum stele with the overlapping hands making a graceful diagonally curved contour (Fig. 6.20h, Bodhisattva at the far right), rather than the stiff vertical “on edge” style or the strictly horizontal view, can be seen not only in the paintings from Karadong of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 6.21), but also in the North Wall paintings of Group 12 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu of ca. 425 (Fig. 7. 41).
- 5) The unusual manner of crossing the feet in some of the Bodhisattvas (Fig. 6.20d, left side) has a similar reverse twist as can be seen in the cross-ankled Maitreya in Fig. 6.22 from Gandhara of ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, and from a stupa fragment from Wu-wei (central Kansu in China) in Fig. 8.56, which probably dates ca. 430’s.
- 6) The lotus pedestals have an upper row of semi-circular petals that stand vertically in a manner similar to that seen in the lotus pedestal of the Śākyamuni painting inside the Group 6 niche (Fig. 7.8; erroneously not included in the drawing in Fig. 7.1)
- 7) The comparative similarities with the Mohammad Nāri stele would tend to support Huntington’s identification as Amitābha’s Buddha land of Sukhāvati, though there are still elements that need to be studied in both the Mohammad Nāri and Peshawar Museum reliefs. The Mohammad Nāri relief would appear to date later than the Peshawar Museum stele, perhaps into the 5<sup>th</sup> century, as the style is similar to some of the later sculptures from the site of Sahrī Bahlōl C and D, whereas the Peshawar Museum stele appears to agree more with the earlier sculptures of Sahrī Bahlōl B.

In sum, this Peshawar Museum relief shows affinity with the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* as known from the early translations into Chinese prior to ca. 424 and to relate in a number of aspects with the inscribed and dated Group 6 niche with the Amitāyus triad in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu. If this interpretation is sustainable, then this Peshawar relief would seem to be one of the earliest images from Gandhāra identifiable as Amitābha/Amitāyus (together with his Buddha land), probably from the Peshawar region, and likely to date ca. 400 or a little earlier. While the Mathurā fragment of an Amitāyus dated 153 is the earliest known single image of Amitāyus, this Gandhāran stele in the Peshāwar Museum may well be one of the earliest known representations of Amitābha/Amitāyus in Sukhāvati.

#### d. *Afghanistan, Central Asia and South India*

It is clear that the various locales of northwest India have some distinct differences with respect to their art forms, and presumably in their doctrinal affiliation as well. This will be one subject considered in more detail in Chapter 8 below. Foucher and more recently, M. Taddei were well aware of this phenomenon,<sup>361</sup> and understanding these various local regional differences could be of some importance in understanding the sources and relationships of early Chinese Buddhist art. Iconographically, with regard to the representation of the Śrāvastī Miracles (the “twin miracles” and the “multiplication”), the Afghan schools such as Shotorak and Kham Zargar in Kāpīsī are important, especially in the number of large images of the “twin miracles” (the display of fire and water). There does not appear to occur at those sites the interest in the triad, either simple or complex, as seen in the later phase of Gandhāran art of the Peshawar Valley. However, the stucco sculptures of the Haḍḍa area and the site at Bāmiyān show altogether different emphases in their art, some of which seem to relate to elements

<sup>361</sup> M. Taddei, “Chronological Problems Connected with Buddhist Unbaked-clay Sculpture from Afghanistan and Surrounding Areas,” in *Coins, Art, and Chronology*, ed. by M. Alram and D. Klimburg-Salter, Wein, 1999, pp. 391-396.



in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, though not specifically to the theme of Amitābha and Sukhāvātī, as far as can be discerned as yet.

Among the early caves at Kizil (dating prior to ca. 425, see Vol. II), the triad of seated Buddha attended by two standing Bodhisattvas does not appear. It would seem that the caves of the early phase are all Hinayāna, and do not display Mahāyāna elements in the wall paintings that survive. However, at the site of Kumtura, Cave GK 120 appears to have Mahāyāna iconography, notably the rows of triads in the main chamber. These are repetitive triads without the possibility of identifying them at present. This cave was dated to late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Vol. II.

While Khotan and Turfan could be expected to have early Mahāyāna art, the remains from the area of the former site do not readily show any triad formulation that could be associated with Amitābha. Turfan bears more study, as will appear in a subsequent volume of this series, but it does not appear to have had any substantial influence on the art of Group 6 niche in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, as far as can be seen at present.

In the art of Amarāvātī, Nāgārjunakoṇḍā and other related sites of Andhra Pradesh, there does not appear to be a similar kind of triad that could point to a possible identity as a Mahāyāna triad or possible Amitābha/Amitāyus triad in Sukhāvātī.

#### 4. *Summary Conclusions Regarding the Iconography of the Group 6 Amitāyus Triad*

Conclusions regarding the textual basis for the Group 6 triad were seen from the study earlier in this chapter point to the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) probably translated by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün and put out in 421 in Chien-k'ang. Although evidences of Amitābha Buddha and of Amitābha with the two great Bodhisattvas represented as a triad or in a more elaborate scene of Sukhāvātī prior to ca. mid 5<sup>th</sup> century appear to be scant as far as we can determine at this point, there nevertheless are some signs in the art of the Mathurā and Gandhāra regions for icons of Amitābha. These include the inscribed Amitābha pedestal dated to the first year in the reign of Huviṣka (ca. 153 A.D.) from Govindnagar, and the relief stele in the Peshawar Museum of ca. 400 seen in Figs. 6.20a-j. The large Mohammad Nāri stele also remains a possible contender, but requires more study. Though these are slender threads of evidence, they nevertheless indicate the likely sources for the iconography of the Amitāyus triad of Group 6 in Cave 169, dated to 424 (or 420).

Because of the prime evidence provided by the inscriptions of the Group 6 niche regarding the identity of the images and dating of the niche, the Group 6 sculptures become a major element in the discussion of the development of Amitābha/Amitāyus, the two great Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and for Sukhāvātī in early Mahāyāna Buddhist art. Since the identity of Amitābha/Amitāyus is integrally and clearly related to the rise of Mahāyāna, these materials are also of critical importance in the search of the developments of Mahāyāna, of which China is actually a vital player.

Fortunately, in the Group 6 sculptures the iconographic elements are generally clear and well preserved. The Buddha is seated on a lotus, his legs are crossed (without the feet exposed), his hands are in meditation (dhyāna) mudrā—not in the dharmachakra teaching mudrā—and his robe is in the form of a half-sling mode (Fig. 4.15h), which is likely derived from prototypes as known in the art of Afghanistan and Kumtura (Kucha) of this time. The Bodhisattvas both wear similar crowns (they are not the turban-crowns of Gandhāra, but are simple wreath form with a kerchief form of ribbons as known in the Kizil wall paintings), long hair, and Bodhisattva ornaments. Both stand on a lotus pedestal and both probably hold a lotus bud (this is clear for Kuan-shih-yin, but not entirely certain for Te-

ta-shih-chih whose right hand is somewhat damaged) with one hand and hold the end of the shoulder scarf with the other hand. The form of ornamentation, dress and manner of holding an object, though having some hint of Gandhāran modes, is nevertheless quite distinct. Stylistically speaking, the elements of robe portrayal and crown forms have some relation with what is known in the wall paintings of Kizil and Kumtura, but as yet we cannot iconographically identify an Amitābha with the two great Bodhisattvas from any surviving art there or at any other site of Central Asia dating before ca. 420-424.

The iconography and the artistic, stylistic features need to be considered separately, as they can be distinct from each other with regard to sources. The artist's training may well be based on certain prototypes, whereas the iconographic formation of the images may follow the prototypes of a different source, or even be deduced by the religious experts from the texts.

The stylistic factors with regard to the Group 6 niche and the lack of any clear iconographic prototype from India (other than the Peshawar Museum stele) or Central Asia among the works we know now, could imply some originality coming from China itself. But where in China? The most reasonable estimation would be from South China where, as seen in the text study above, Amitāyus was popular, at least to a certain extent, in the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century and especially because of the belief in Amitābha/Amitāyus by Hui-yüan and his disciples and followers at Lu shan. Hui-yüan was a giant of his age and his influence cannot be underestimated, especially in the South and especially with regard to spreading the worship of Amitābha/Amitāyus among the people of the South, including high officials and wealthy families, intellectuals and scholars. We know from his biography about those who belonged to his White Lotus Society for the worship of Amitābha, and the 123 persons, both monastic and secular, who vowed to be reborn in Sukhāvati. It would seem that the solidification of Amitābha/Amitāyus and Sukhāvati belief was strong in the South during the life time of Hui-yüan (d. 416) and probably earlier as well, given the cases of the famous monks Chih-tun and Chu Fa-k'uang (see Nos. 8 and 9 above). It is from the South that this belief may have spread to Western Ch'in and to have at least partially been a cause that inspired the making of the Group 6 niche in 424 (or 420), by a group of influential monks and secular donors, the latter, as we shall see below in Chapter 7, whose garb appears to relate to the high fashion of the South.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PING-LING SSU CAVE 169: NORTH WALL (II)

This chapter continues the study of the Group 6 niche into the wall paintings and inscriptions, both of which, though complicated, offer rare evidences of importance for the study of early Buddhist art in China. The remaining groups of sculptures and paintings on the North Wall also provide not only some of the finest art of the time, but contain examples of far-reaching significance as datable evidences for developments in Buddhist art in other regions later in the century, including an important example of the set of five Buddhas, an issue that will engage us further in Chapter 8.

#### I. NORTH WALL: MIDDLE ZONE (CONTINUED)

We continue our study of the Group 6 niche in the middle zone of the North Wall by examining the wall paintings and the inscriptions, including the major donor's inscription that bears the date of the niche. In addition, Group 7, the final group in the middle zone, offers a large and splendid sculpture group with one particularly well-preserved, standing Buddha statue that has already become one of the famous representatives of Cave 169 art.

##### A. *Group 6: Wall Paintings and Inscriptions*

There are quite a few wall paintings and inscriptions associated with Group 6. Most are only partially preserved, but generally enough remains to impart important information. They will be carefully studied here, as they clearly indicate some intriguing historical and religious trends not only under the Western Ch'in in the most flourishing period of that kingdom, but some also have wider implications that offer glimpses of the society of the time, the evolution of Buddhist ideas, regional movements and cross-movements within the Buddhist and lay communities of the time, and even offer important evidences contributing to wider issues, such as those concerning Buddhist text studies. These paintings and inscriptions will be discussed in groups, primarily those that are inside the niche and relate to the Buddhist image iconography, and then those outside the niche that deal primarily with the donors of this remarkable image niche.

##### 1. *Wall Paintings Inside the Group 6 Niche*

Above the sculpture of Te-ta-shih-chih (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) Bodhisattva (Amitāyus Buddha's left attendant) is painted a group of the ten-direction Buddhas in two rows, each image with a label giving the direction and name of the Buddha (Figs. 7.1, 7.2). Below the ten-direction Buddhas and at the left side of the Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva sculpture is painted a standing Bodhisattva labeled by a black ink colophon as "Mi-lo p'u-sa" 彌勒菩薩 (Maitreya Bodhisattva). To the right (facing) of the Maitreya Bodhisattva appears a large painting of a standing Buddha with mandorla under a green canopy. This Buddha is labeled "Shih-chia-mou-ni fo" 釋迦牟尼佛 (Śākyamuni Buddha). Other

colophons, paintings of donors and some other images, appear below the figures of Śākyamuni and Maitreya and around the large inscription dated Chien-hung first year 建弘元年 (420) or Hsüan-hsiao 玄柁 (424), which is at the right (facing) of the Śākyamuni painting (Figs. 7.1, 7.8 and 7.10a). It is clear that all of these paintings are related to the Amitāyus niche as a whole. These as well as a few other painting remains within the niche are each individually discussed below.

a. *Ten-direction Buddhas*

Though most of the ten Buddhas are damaged in one way or another, we can get a general composite of the style by gleaning remaining elements from the whole group. These images are important for a number of reasons: 1) because of the 424 (or 420) date of this niche they can be used in stylistically comparing with the images sets of Buddhas, such as those of the thousand Buddhas that frequently appear in the cave temple paintings at other sites in Kansu in addition to those within Cave 169, others at Ping-ling ssu and Mai-chi shan; 2) the ten-direction Buddhas is an iconography that appears to be of some importance in Cave 169; it also occurs in the sculptures of Group 18 and possibly in other paintings of the North Wall; 3) since each Buddha is inscribed with its respective name and direction in an accompanying colophon, it is possible to locate the text from which they are taken, and this in itself yields some amazing results with interesting implications; and 4) the certain identification as the ten-direction Buddhas has far-reaching implications for the iconographic issues of other areas, including Gandhāra, as we shall see in Chapter 8. First the stylistic features of the paintings will be analyzed and then we will turn our attention to the textual and iconographic aspects.

i. Discussion of the style

All the Buddhas are seated dhyānāsana (Figs. 7.3a, b). Their hands have the thumbs touching making a triangular shape. The faces are round, the uṣṇīṣa is moderate size, and the hair on the cranium is quite shallow. The saṅghāṭī covers both shoulders and the cowl is band-like and nearly circular with outward curved edges as it passes over the shoulders. Some outlines in black (possibly oxidized from original red color) remain, and it appears there may have been some parallel fold lines, but most all are lost, so it is hard to distinguish. It does not appear that different colors were used to model the fold creases. A vertical band at the edge of the robe as it falls over the wrists and a band on the hems that lie on the top of the pedestal are distinguished by the malachite green color. The formation of these bands is very similar to those in the scheme seen in the famous, well-preserved, small, seated, wooden Buddha in the 'Sarnath style' from the stupa court of the Western Group at Tumshuk-Tagh discussed in Vol. II and dated there to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 7.4).<sup>1</sup> The particular shaping of the hems over the wrists and legs and the plain, apron-like lap of the robe in the center as well as the shaping of the cowl collar are similar in each. The stylistic linkage with the Tumshuk image is yet another indication of a pervasive influence from the Northern Route sites of Central Asia in the art of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century China, a factor already noted a number of times. The head and body halos that form the mandorlas of the Buddhas (which barely touch each other at the sides between the Buddhas) have wide outer bands of either white or malachite green, alternatingly used among the ten Buddhas to slightly distinguishing each one. The wide band is bordered on the inside by a thin dark red band which has some short cross lines in white. The inner portion of the body halo has a large, loosely drawn flame design with wavy, hook-shaped flames (Fig. 7.3a). These are white or malachite green in alternating Buddhas. The flames are boldly outlined with a darker (red or black) color. The lotus seat is circular with an encircling zone

<sup>1</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 542.

of red and malachite. The canopy seems to be portraying a circular canopy with a ruffled edge that flares outward (best seen in the two left Buddhas in the lower row in Fig. 7.3a),<sup>2</sup> somewhat similar to the large canopy of the standing Śākayamuni painting nearby (Figs. 7.1, 7.2), but with less elaborate detail. The canopy is presented as though seen head-on without showing the underside. Like the mandorlas, they alternate in the usage of color combinations: green top with white fringe or white top with green fringe in alternating Buddhas. The alternation of colors, albeit rather restricted, provides some distinction between the Buddhas. Small lotus buds dot the wall in a few places around the Buddhas.

The ten Buddhas of the Group 6 niche paintings are presented as quite standardized with only a simple variation in color. Basically, they are all the same size and posture and have the same robe depiction. This presentation is, however, much more logically and carefully portrayed than the thousand Buddhas of Group 24 on the East Wall dating to ca. 400 in our discussion above in Chapter 5 (Figs. 5.4b, 5.5, 5.14a).

## ii. Identification of the ten Buddhas

There are two rows of five dhyānāsana Buddhas making the ten-direction Buddhas, each of which is named in an accompanying colophon near the image as follows (Figs. 7.1, 7.3a and 7.3b):<sup>3</sup>

### *Top row (from left to right):*

East [direction] 東□ : (the remainder of the colophon is not clear, but according to Wei Wen-pin,<sup>4</sup> it reads: P'eng-chih fo 朋智佛)

North direction 北方 Hsing-chih fo 行智佛

West direction 西方 Hsi-chih fo 習智佛

South direction 南方 Chih-huo fo 智火佛

East ? ? ? ? [probably Northeast direction] 東□□□□

### *Lower row (from right to left):*

[all characters missing: probably Southeast direction] □□□□□□

Southwest direction 西南方 Shang-chih fo 上智佛

Northwest direction 西北方 Tzu-tsai-chih fo 自在智佛

Nadir direction 下方 Fan-chih fo 梵智佛

Zenith direction 上方 Fu-yüan fo 伏怨佛

There could be various ways of sequentially reading these ten Buddhas (from top to bottom, starting at the left or at the right, or alternating between the upper and lower lines with each individual Buddha, etc.), but the system presented above is the way the ten-direction Buddhas are named in the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*), the text from which they appear to have been taken (discussed in detail below). Interestingly, this way of reading yields a circular path starting from the left side of the top row and reading across the row to the right, then continuing to the bottom row from the right and ending at the far left, that is, making a complete circle back to the starting point. This factor is especially noted here because this representation of the ten-direction Buddhas is dated to ca. 424 (or 420)

<sup>2</sup> These have mistakenly been left out of the drawing in Fig. 7.1.

<sup>3</sup> The reading of the inscriptions is according to Wei Wen-pin in Wei (1994), p. 5 in Teng (1994). Some can also be read directly from the photograph in Fig. 7.3a.

<sup>4</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 5.



and the presentation is an important occurrence of what appears to be a tendency to place the sets of Buddhas into a circular arrangement, which has a more 3 dimensional implication, as opposed to a strictly linear or 2 dimensional arrangement. The same phenomenon can be witnessed in the shih-t'a (stone stupas) of Liang chou dated in the 420's and 430's (such as those in Figs. 5.11 and 7.42), and it will be discussed as well below with regard to a painting in Group 12 on the North Wall.

Most of the colophons of the ten-direction Buddhas of the Group 6 niche painting are still readable, but those whose characters are illegible or worn out can be readily reconstructed from the ten-direction Buddhas which appear in the *Hua-yen ching*, the text to which the surviving colophons accurately match, as put forth by Chang Pao-hsi in his important 1992 article.<sup>5</sup> As discussed above in Chapter 4 concerning Group 18 of the West Wall, a number of texts that had been translated into Chinese by ca. 425 contain references to the ten-direction Buddhas (see Chapter 4, section II.B.2). Most often, however, they are simply mentioned as a group and not named individually or linked to a specific direction. In the *Lotus Sutra* the specific directions are mentioned, but the ten-direction Buddhas are cited (many times) as emanations or "transformed bodies" of Śākyamuni and not named individually. In the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (*Larger Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra*, T 360) they are named and given directions, but the names do not correspond to the names in the Group 6 colophons.<sup>6</sup> However, as presented by Chang Pao-hsi, the names and directions match those of the *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra.<sup>7</sup>

The section in which the names of the ten-direction Buddhas appear is called "The Names of the Tathāgata" (Ju-lai ming hao p'in 如來名號品), which is chüan 4, section (p'in) three. This section begins by stating that the Buddha Śākyamuni had just attained enlightenment in the forest in Magadha, that he was dwelling in Buddhahood and perceived all past, present and future. Together with him there were myriad Great Bodhisattvas who were qualified to attain Buddhahood in one more lifetime. These Bodhisattvas had gathered together from various regions and each in their own way was wishing that Buddha would reveal to them the Buddha fields, the nature of Buddhahood, the teachings expounded by the Buddhas, etc., just as the Buddhas of the ten-directions explain in order to develop all Bodhisattvas.

The passage then continues as follows:

... At that time the World Honored One knew what the various Bodhisattvas were thinking. Then he manifested supra-ordinary mystical power. When the supra-ordinary mystical power appeared [was accomplished], then from the eastern direction 東方, passing through worlds as many in number as the dust motes (atoms) in ten Buddha lands, where there was a world called Chin-she 金色 (Golden Color) and the Buddha was called Pu-tung chih 不動智 (Unmoving Wisdom), there came a Bodhisattva called Mañjuśrī 文殊師利 together with Bodhisattvas as many in number as the dust motes (atoms) of ten Buddha lands. They came to where Buddha was and respectfully worshipped him by touching their head to his feet. Thereupon, they went to the eastern direction and sat cross-legged on transformed lotus-bedecked lion thrones.

From the southern direction 南方 passing through worlds as many in number as the dust motes (atoms) in ten Buddha lands, where there was a world called Lo-se 樂色 (Joyful Color/Form) and the

<sup>5</sup> Chang Pao-hsi, "Chien-hung t'i ch'i chi ch'i yu kuan wen t'i te kao shih," (Consideration of the Chien-hung Inscription and Related Problems), *Tun-huang yen-chiu*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 12-14.

<sup>6</sup> Inagaki and Stewart (2003), pp. 68-69 (from *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 360), p. 278c), where Buddha Śākyamuni tells Maitreya Bodhisattva of 13 other Buddha lands and gives the names of their Buddhas.

<sup>7</sup> Chang (1992), pp. 13-14.

Buddha was called Chih-huo 智火 (Wisdom Fire), there came a Bodhisattva called Chieh-shou 覺首 (Chief of the Enlightened) together with Bodhisattvas as many in number as the dust motes (atoms) of ten Buddha lands. They came to where the Buddha was and respectfully worshipped him by touching their head to his feet. Thereupon, in the southern direction, there were transformed lotus flower lion thrones, and they sat on them cross-legged.

From the western direction 西方... world called Hua-se 華色 (Flower Color/Form) ... Buddha called Hsi-chih 習智 (Practiced Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Pei-shou 貝首 (Chief of the Precious) ...

From the North direction 北方... world called Chan-hua-se 瞻華色 (Golden Flower Color) ... Buddha called Hsing-chih 行智 (Wisdom of Practice) ... Bodhisattva called Pao-shou 寶首 (Chief of Treasures) ...

From the Northeast direction 東北方 ... World named Ch'ing-hua se 青華色 (Blue Lotus Flower Color) ... Buddha called Ming-chih 明智 (Bright Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Te-shou 德首 (Chief of Virtue) ...

From the Southeast direction 東南方 ... world called Chin-se 金色 (Golden Color) ... Buddha called Chiu-ching-chih 究竟智 (Ultimate Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Mu-shou 目首 (Chief of Vision) ...

From the Southwest direction 西南方 ... world called Pao-se 寶色 (Jewel Color) ... Buddha called Shang-chih 上智 (Highest Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Chin shou 進首 (Chief in Advancing) ...

From the Northwest direction 西北方 ... world named Chin-kang-se 金剛色 (Diamond Color) ... Buddha called Tzu-tsai-chih 自在智 (Self-established Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Fa-shou 法首 (Chief of the Dharma) ...

From the Nadir direction 下方 ... world called P'o-li-se 頗梨色 (Vaidūrya Color) ... Buddha called Pan-chih 梵智 (Pure Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Chih-shou 智首 (Chief in Wisdom) ...

From the Zenith direction 上方 ... world called Ju-pao-se 如寶色 (Jewel Color)... Buddha called Fu-yüan-chih 伏怨智 (Conquering-anger Wisdom) ... Bodhisattva called Hsien-shou 賢首 (Chief of Worthiness) ...<sup>8</sup>

From this excerpt we can see the match of the Buddha's names and accompanying direction in the Group 6 colophons to the Buddha names and corresponding directions given in the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* as translated by Buddhahadra (Fig. 7.3b). Further, we can supply the missing portions of the colophon identification for the Northeast Buddha, who is Ming-chih 明智, and for the Southeast Buddha, who is Chiu-ching-chih 究竟智. We can also correct the East direction Buddha, which should be Pu-tung Chih 不動智 (rather than P'eng-chih fo 朋智佛).

Interestingly, this section of text of the *Hua-yen ching* does not stop with only this one set of ten-direction Buddhas, but continues by unfolding yet another series of ten-directions, naming the direction, name of the Buddha land, name of the Buddha, name of the Bodhisattva, etc. After that, yet another series of ten-direction Buddha lands, different from the previous two, is named, complete with individual names of the direction, the land, the Buddha, the Bodhisattva, and so on. Thus, the implication is a vast, unending series of named Buddha worlds in the ten-directions. Not only that, each Buddha has a myriad different names. It is an unfolding of the immensity and inconceivably infinite Buddha fields and Buddha names as known by the omniscience of the enlightened Buddha, who reveals all of this to the Great Bodhisattvas present at the time of his enlightenment. It is as though

<sup>8</sup> *Ta-fang kuang fo hua-yen ching*, chüan 4, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 418. This portion as it is translated into English from the T'ang Dynasty translation of the *Hua-yen ching* can be seen in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, translated by Thomas Cleary, Boulder and London, 1984, Vol. I, pp. 270-275.

there is an unfolding of all the Buddhas of the ten-directions multiple times over in a vast, unending display.

With regard to the representation in the Group 6 niche, we can think that by merely painting the first set of ten-direction Buddhas and naming each of them and their direction, then that naturally leads to all the others that unfold as written in the text. So the presentation in Group 6 is the beginning, but the implication is an infinite unfolding. That is, this group of ten-direction Buddhas actually implies the endless ground of Buddhas, just like the thousand Buddha panels imply the ground of the thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa against which other images are portrayed and appear. In a way, it is another expression similar to the thousand Buddhas, but differently expressed and more vast in concept as it sets the ground of infinite space as viewed by the omniscient, enlightened Buddha and is thus an expression of the Dharmakāya. The injection of the Hua-yen cosmology into the Group 6 niche enlarges the scope of the iconography based on the new translations taking place around in the early 420's, and marks a major new development in Chinese Buddhism, which is being reflected in the art in Cave 169. This is such an important development, that the details and data are pursued more in depth in the following sections.

### iii. Buddhahadra and the Translation of the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching*

A small portion of the *Hua-yen ching* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*) had been translated by Dharmarakṣa in 291 A.D. (apparently equivalent to the next to the last chapter of Buddhahadra's translation). Also, the monk Sheng-chien 聖堅, who was in Western Ch'in in the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century (see above section I.B.1), translated the *Lo-mo-chia ching* 羅摩伽經, which is the *Ju-fa-chieh p'in* 入法界品 section of the *Hua-yen ching*. The *Ju-fa-chieh p'in* is the last chapter of the *Hua-yen ching*, also known as the *Gandhavyūha* (chüan 44-60 in the Buddhahadra translation). It was with Buddhahadra that the 60-chüan text was translated in full from a text brought back to China from Khotan by Chih Fa-ling 支法領 (a disciple of Hui-yüan at Lu shan in the South), who had gone west in 393 A.D. at Hui-yüan's request to go to Central Asia in search of Buddhist texts. He returned to China in 408 with "many Sanskrit manuscripts."<sup>9</sup> The information concerning the Buddhahadra translation of the *Hua-yen ching* comes from two citations in the CTSCC and a 108-character colophon at the end of the *Hua-yen ching* in the *Daizōkyō* edition. Because of the special importance of this translation in the context of Group 6, these three citations are translated here.

### a) Early Records of the Buddhahadra Translation of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*

Here the three early records regarding the translation of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* into Chinese, including two from the CSTCC and a 108-character colophon at the end of the Chinese translation of the text reproduced in the *Daizōkyō*, are examined in some detail.

#### 1) CSTCC, chüan 2:

Ta-fang kuang fo hua-yen ching 大方廣佛華嚴經, fifty chüan 五十卷, Sha-men Chih Fa-ling 沙門支法領 at Yü-tien (Khotan) 於于闐國 obtained this sutra 得此經; the foreign book (hu pen) arrived in [Eastern] Chin 胡本到晉; in I-hsi 義熙 14<sup>th</sup> year 十四年 third month 三月 10<sup>th</sup> day 十日<sup>10</sup> at the

<sup>9</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), p.460.

<sup>10</sup> Eastern Chin I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day is April 30, 418 A.D.

Tao-ch'ang ssu 於道場寺 [it was] translated, and came out 譯出至 in Sung 宋 Yung-ch'u 永初 2<sup>nd</sup> year 二年 twelfth month 十二月 28<sup>th</sup> day 二十八日<sup>11</sup> completely finished 都訖.<sup>12</sup>

This excerpt is the shortest of the three. With regard to the date, it tells that the translation occurred between 418 (I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year) and 422 (Yung-ch'u 2<sup>nd</sup> year), when it was “completely finished.”

2) CSTCC, chüan 9:

Hua-yen ching chi, No.1 華嚴經記第一, later record of putting out the sutra 出經後記. The Hua-yen ching is a foreign book (hu-pen 胡本<sup>13</sup>) in about 100,000 verses 凡十萬偈. Formerly, the Buddhist 昔道人 Chih Fa-ling 支法領, from Khotan 從于闐 obtained this [book] in 36,000 verses 得此三萬六千偈. In [Eastern] Chin I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year, *tz'u* (stations of Jupiter) ch'un-huo (Quail Fire),<sup>14</sup> third month, 10<sup>th</sup> day 以普義熙十四年歲次鶉火三月十日 (418 A.D.), at Yang chou 於楊州, Ssu-k'ung 司空 (Minister of Works) Hsieh Shih 謝石<sup>15</sup> established the Tao-t'ang ssu 所立道場寺. Requested the Indian meditation master 請天竺禪師 Fo-t'u pa t'o lo to 佛度跋陀羅 (Buddhabhadra) to hold the Sanskrit text 手梵文 and translate the foreign [book] into Chinese 譯胡爲晉. Sha-men Shih Fa-yeh 沙門釋法業 personally attended to writing it with his own hand 親從筆受. At that time 時 the Wu-chün 吳郡 Nei-shih 內史 (Royal Scribe) Meng I 孟顗 and the Yu-wei Chiang-chün 右衛將軍 (Right Guard General) Chu Shu-tu 褚叔度 were the *dānapati* (patrons) 爲檀越. Coming to Yüan-hsi 至元熙熙 2<sup>nd</sup> year 二年 6<sup>th</sup> month 六月 10<sup>th</sup> day 十日 (420 A.D.) reached completion 出訖. All again collated (revised) with the foreign [Sanskrit] book 凡再校胡本. Coming to Great Sung 至大宋 Yung-ch'u 2<sup>nd</sup> year 永初二年 hsin ch'ou year 辛丑之歲 (422 A.D.), 12<sup>th</sup> month 28<sup>th</sup> day the collating (revising) was finished 十二月二十八日校畢.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the information contained in this second excerpt is also seen in the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Buddhabhadra, translated below, but it is this record that fills in the most details, including specific dates for the beginning of the project, including the making of the Tao-ch'ang ssu in Yang chou, in 418 A.D. (I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year, *tz'u* (stations of Jupiter) ch'un-huo (Quail Fire), third month, 10<sup>th</sup> day), the completion of the translation in 420 A.D. (Yüan-hsi 2<sup>nd</sup> year), and the date of the completion of the collating (revising) with the foreign text in 422 A.D. (Yung-ch'u 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

The third record (the “108 character” colophon) at the end of the Buddhabhadra translation of the *Hua-yen ching* is similar to the second record above, but is more abbreviated and does not contain the sentence concerning the collation (revision), as follows.

3) “108 character” *Hua-yen ching* colophon:

[*Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經 ... ch'u ch'i 出訖 The *Hua-yen ching*....completed] One-hundred eight characters 百八字

*Hua-yen ching* Sanskrit book is generally 100,000 verses. Formerly, the Buddhist Chih Fa-ling went to Khotan and obtained this 36,000 verses. In [Eastern] Chin I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year, *tz'u* year Quail Fire, 3<sup>rd</sup> month tenth day, the Ssu-k'ung (Minister of Works) of Yang chou, Hsieh Shih, built the Tao-t'ang ssu

<sup>11</sup> [Liu] Sung Yung-ch'u 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 12<sup>th</sup> month, 28<sup>th</sup> day is February 5, 422.

<sup>12</sup> CSTCC, chüan 2, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 11c.

<sup>13</sup> Suggested to be Sanskrit 梵 in note 1, p. 61a, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145).

<sup>14</sup> The *tz'u* reading is Quail-Fire, which matches with the cyclic year 午 (戊午 = 418 A.D.). See Edward Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars*, Berkeley, 1977, table 2, p. 76.

<sup>15</sup> Hsieh Shih was the younger brother of the Chancellor, Hsieh An. He built the Tao-ch'ang ssu (also known as the Tou-ch'ang ssu). Tsukamoto (1985), p. 398.

<sup>16</sup> CSTCC, chüan 9, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), pp. 60c-61a.

and requested the Indian meditation master, Fo-t'u pa t'o lo 佛度跋陀羅 (Buddhabhadra) to hold the Sanskrit text and translate the Sanskrit into Chinese. The sha-men Shih Fa-yeh personally attended to the brush writing. At that time the Royal Scribe, Meng I of Wu chün, and the General of the Right Guard, Chu Shu-tu were the patrons (dānapati). Coming to Yüan-hsi 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 6<sup>th</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day, it was completed.<sup>17</sup>

From these records we can conclude that the translation began in 418 (I-hsi 14<sup>th</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day), that the translation from Sanskrit into Chinese by Buddhabhadra (with Fa-yeh writing down the Chinese) was finished in 420 (Yüan-hsi 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 6<sup>th</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day), and that the collation (and revision) with the Sanskrit text was finished in 422 (Yung-chu 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 12<sup>th</sup> month, 28<sup>th</sup> day). It is interesting to note that the *nien-hao* dates are reinforced with the *tz'u* (stations of Jupiter) date with regard to the 418 date in both records 2) and 3) and with the *kan-chih* (60 year cyclic date) of “hsin-ch'ou” in the case of the 422 date in record 2). Since these dates all match, there is no ambiguity in the reading, such as we find in the date of the main inscription of Group 6, whose *nien-hao* date and *tz'u* date do not match.<sup>18</sup>

Buddhabhadra was a famous dhyānā master from Kapilavastu who had studied in Chi-pin (which could be either Gandhāra or Kashmir, but at this period is more than likely to refer to Gandhāra—see discussions in Chapters 1 and 8). He came to Ch'ang-an at the time Kumārajīva was there in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, but was wrongly banished from Ch'ang-an in ca. 411, a fact that distressed Hui-yüan (then at Lu shan), who tried unsuccessfully to mitigate this decision. Hui-yüan then invited Buddhabhadra to Lu shan. He came with about 40 followers and did some translations there at Hui-yüan's request. Later, probably sometime in 412 according to Tsukamoto,<sup>19</sup> he went to Chiang-ling (west of Lu shan) and then east to Chien-k'ang 建康 (Nanking), the capital of the Eastern Chin, at the invitation of Liu Yü (then the powerful T'ai-wei, but later—in 420—the founder of the [Liu] Sung dynasty). After 416 Buddhabhadra made a number of momentous translations, one of which was the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Hua-yen ching*) in 60 chüan. As made clear in the records translated above. He started the translation in 418 at the Tao-t'ang ssu (just built in 418) from the text brought earlier from Khotan by Chih Fa-ling. The translation was completed in early 420 with Sha-men Shih Fa-yeh 法業 writing the Chinese; the collation with the original foreign text was completed in early 422. There is further data concerning the dates of the *Hua-yen ching* in the biography of Buddhabhadra translated in the following section.

#### b) Translation of the *Kao-seng chuan* Biography of Buddhabhadra

Because of the pertinent connections of some translations done by Buddhabhadra with several of the wall paintings of Group 6 in Cave 169, and of the immense importance of his translations for the developments of Buddhism from ca. 416 and later, his entire biography from the *Kao-seng chuan* is translated here.

Buddhabhadra (Fo-t'o pa t'o lo 佛馱跋陀羅) was called Chüeh-hsien 覺賢. His original family name was Shih 釋. He was a Kapilavastu (Chia-wei-lo-wei 迦維羅衛) person, a descendant of Fan

<sup>17</sup> *Hua-yen ching*, chüan 60, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 788b.

<sup>18</sup> It is possible that there may have originally been an error by the author, scribe, or calligrapher of the Group 6 main inscription, perhaps mistaking yüan 元 (first year) with wu 五 (5<sup>th</sup> year) in the *nien-hao* date, especially if it had been written originally in grass or running script at some point.

<sup>19</sup> Tsukamoto (1985), see pp. 880-883, 885.



wang 飯王 (Ambrosia Rice King).<sup>20</sup> His grandfather, Ta-ma-t'i-p'o 達摩提婆, was called Fa-t'ien 法天 (Dharma Deity). He traded with North India and because of that he settled down there. His father was Ta-ma-hsiu-yeh-li 達摩修耶利, also called Fa-jih 法日 (Dharma Sun). He died young. Hsien 賢 (Buddhabhadra) was three years old and lived alone with his mother. When he was five, he lost his mother, so his maternal family cared for him. His grandfather's brother, Chiu-p'o-li 鳩婆利 heard he was very talented and he was sorry for his losing his parents when he was so young. So [he] welcomed him and brought him back and made him to be a śramaṇa (sha-mi 沙彌). When he was seventeen together with the same study fellows, he learned to memorize his work. While ordinary people needed one month, Hsien finished memorizing in one day. So his teacher was amazed and said "Hsien's one day is equal to 30 days for ordinary people. He received the full precepts (chü-chieh 具戒) and cultivated them very diligently. He widely learned a multitude of sutras and penetrated many things. When he was young he was famous for meditation and vinaya. He was always with the same study monks, and with the monk Chia Ta-to 伽達多. Together they traveled to Chi-pin (probably Gandhāra) and spent many years together. [Chia] Ta-to, though admiring his brilliant talent, had not yet fathomed the person. Later, in a private room with closed door, he [Ta-to] was sitting in meditation. Suddenly he saw Hsien come. Startled, he asked "Who is coming?" [Hsien] answered, "For some time I went to Tuṣita Heaven. I was able to pay respects to Maitreya." As the words finished, he suddenly vanished. Ta-to knew him to be a saintly person, but he was not yet able to measure his depth. Later, he frequently saw that Hsien was mysteriously transforming. Then with respectful mind, he sincerely questioned [Hsien]. Then he knew that [Hsien] had attained "non-returner" (pu-huan-kuo 不還果; anāgāmin).

[Hsien] always wanted to travel around widely to many areas propagating and converting and seeing the customs. At that time there was the Ch'in 秦 monk (sha-men) called Chih-yen 智嚴 who went west to Chi-pin. He saw that the Dharma assembly was pure, clean and victorious, so he was chagrined. Considering the East (i.e., China), he said, "Our people have sincere aspiration for the Way (i.e., Buddhism), but [we] are not meeting a real master, so there is no way we can be enlightened." Then he consulted with a lot of people in that country, asking: "Who is able to go and transform the eastern land?" All said, "There is Buddhabhadra. He was born in India at the place called Na-ho-li ch'eng 那呵利城."<sup>21</sup> His family through the generations upheld the [Buddhist] path. At an early age he [Hsien] became a monk and already penetratingly understood the sutras and commentaries. When he was young he already received and learned the doctrine from the great meditation master Fo-ta-hsien 佛大先, who had earlier been in Chi-pin." Everyone said to [Chih]-yen, "The one who can encourage monks and impart the meditation Dharma—that very person is Buddhabhadra." [Chih]-yen then worked very sincerely to invite him to come [to China]. Then Hsien sympathetically finally agreed to it. Thereupon leaving the people, [he said] farewell to [his] teachers, packed the provisions and vanished into the East. He walked continuously for three years, experiencing cold and heat. He crossed the Ts'ung-ling 葱嶺 (Onion Range) and passed through six countries. The rulers of the countries were sympathetic about his coming from far away and converting along the long way. So they cordially considered him and offered the needed expenses.

Then [Buddhabhadra] arrived at Chiao-chih 交趾 (Vietnam) and went by boat. Following the ocean, they went below (in the lee of) an island. Hsien, pointing to a mountain said, "We should stop

<sup>20</sup> Soothill (1937 and 1977), p. 195.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Shih suggests that this is Nagarāhāra (Haḍḍa, near present day Jellalabad, Afghanistan). R. Shih, *Biographies de Moines Éminents de Houei-Kiao*, Louvain, 1968, p. 91.



at this place. The boat master said, "In traveling we should spare the days. Optimum wind is difficult to meet. We should not stay. So [they] went 200 some *li*. Suddenly, the wind turned around and blew on the boat, so they had to turn back to below (the lee of) the island. Everyone then realized Hsien's super-naturalness. All served him as a master and listened to his instructions about advancing or stopping. Later, they met the wind again. The other companion [boats] all left. Hsien said, "You should not be moving." The boat master then stopped. Already some had departed earlier. In a short while they capsized and were lost. Later on, in the middle of the night, Hsien suddenly ordered all boats to leave together. Those who did not agree did not go. Hsien himself rose and gathered his robes. Only one boat left. Soon afterwards bandits came to where those others were staying and all of them were killed.

Soon [Hsien] arrived at Ch'ing chou 青州 Tung-lai chün 東萊郡 (present day Shantung). He heard that Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 was in Ch'ang-an. Immediately [Hsien] went to follow him. Kumārajīva greatly rejoiced. Together they discussed the Dharma situation. They put their mind into the profound and subtle; much was realized and they benefitted [each other]. In consequence, [Hsien] said to Kumārajīva, "What you have translated did not penetrate the people's mind and yet you have reached high fame. Why is that so?" Kumārajīva answered, "Since I am old, that is why. What is the necessity to be able to take up beautiful chit-chat?" Whenever Kumārajīva had questions about meanings, they always consulted and resolved it together.

At that time, there was a Ch'in 秦 prince 太子 named Hung 泓 who desired to hear Hsien's explanation of the Dharma. Then a group of monks (who were believers in existence) gathered for the discussion at the Eastern Palace. Kumārajīva and Hsien discussed back and forth several times. Kumārajīva asked the question, "What does the Dharma say is empty?" Hsien answered saying, "The multitude of dharmas (wei ch'en 微塵, particles, such as atoms) establish forms; forms are without their own nature (hsing 性). Therefore, although there are forms, they are always empty." Then [Kumārajīva] again asked, "With extremely small dharma (wei 微) destroy the form and the form becomes empty. Then [I] again say, 'What is going to destroy the small dharma?'" [Hsien] answered, "Though lots of masters destroy and break one small dharma, but my mind is said to be not in it." Then Kumārajīva asked, "Then are dharmas always there?" [Hsien] said, "By means of a dharma, therefore the multitude of dharmas are empty. By means of a multitude of dharmas, therefore one dharma is empty." At that time Pao-yün 寶雲 translated this discussion, yet the meaning was not understandable. Buddhists and secular people all said, "What Hsien is attempting to say is that a dharma particle (wei 微) is always there." Several days later, monks studying in Ch'ang-an again requested him to explain. Hsien said, "The Dharma (fa 法) does not have its own self-arising, therefore, causations will cause it to appear. Because of one dharma (atom), a multitude of dharmas (atoms) is possible. A dharma (atom) does not have its own nature, therefore it is empty! That is to say, the non-destruction of one dharma, its permanence, is it not empty? This is the great meaning of the questions and answers."

Ch'in's master, Yao Hsing 姚興, was a sincere believer of Buddhist Dharma (Teaching). He supported (kung-yang) 3,000 monks. They also came and went in the palace buildings and prosperously cultivated human affairs. Only Hsien kept quiet and did not go along with the crowd. Later he said to his disciples, "Yesterday I saw that there were five boats that departed from [my] original homeland (India) [bound for China]." Then [his] disciples told this to foreigners. The old monks in Kuan-chung (i.e., Ch'ang-an) all thought he was misleading the people. Also, in Ch'ang-an Hsien greatly propagated meditation method. From the four directions those who were happily searching all heard of his fame and came. But with regard to study, there were the shallow and the deep—different levels.

In obtaining the Dharma there is thickness and thinness. Under these conditions there was cheating and trickery. There was one disciple, because he had little visualization cultivation, himself said he had obtained anāgāmin (stage of the non-returner). Hsien did not immediately test and question [him]. Consequently, rumors circulated around greatly slandering [Hsien] and there was incalculable disaster. Thereupon lots of people were leaving and some were hiding their name and secretly left. Some crossed the wall and left at night. Within a half day, almost everyone had completely scattered. Hsien was still happy without being concerned. At that time there were the old monks Seng-lui (?) 僧(勃/石), Tao-heng 道恒 and others who said to Hsien, "Even Buddha did not authorize his monks to speak of the spiritual qualities which they had not obtained.<sup>22</sup> Earlier, you [Hsien] had said that five boats had already left [India] and were about to come [to China], but that is empty and without truth. Also, your disciples are cheating and misleading and there is mutual discrepancy among them. Already with regard to the vinaya there are differences. With regard to the regulations they do not have the same correctness. It is better if you leave; you should not remain here." Hsien said, "My body is like duckweed. It is very easy for me to stay or go. But I feel sorry that I have not explained yet what I had in mind. It is too bad! Thereupon with his disciples Hui-kuan 慧觀 and others, 40-some, they left altogether. [Their] spirit and mind composed, [they] began without any different appearance. Knowing what really happened, people all together regretted. Young and old, 1,000 some people sent them off. When Yao Hsing heard that [Hsien] was leaving, he was disappointed. Then [Yao Hsing] said to Tao-heng 道恒 "Fo-hsien 佛賢 (i.e., Buddhahadbra) together with the monks came wanting to propagate the transmitted doctrines. The discussions were completed, but not yet put out, therefore there is deep regret. How can it be with one erroneous word to order 10,000 people to be without a leader?" Consequently an imperial order was issued to go overtake [Hsien]. Hsien told the emissary, "I sincerely realize [Yao Hsing's] kind purpose, [but I] am not prepared to hear the order." Thereupon, leading his companions, together they left, going south to Lu-ku (the peaks of Lu shan).

The monk Shih Hui-yüan 釋慧遠 had long admired his fame. He heard [Hsien] was coming and he was overjoyed and happy like [meeting] an old friend. [Hui]-yüan with regard to Hsien's being the object of expulsion caused by the attendants [the Ch'ang-an monks at court], if set aside the record of the five boats, then it is only talk. Also, with regard to the vinaya, [Hsien] was without violation of the rules. Then [Hui-yüan] sent his disciple T'an-i 曇邕 with a letter to the ruler Yao[Hsing] and the various monks of Kuan-chung (Ch'ang-an) to resolve the expulsion matter (to rescind the expulsion matter). [Hui]-yüan then requested [Hsien] to put out meditation [texts] and various sutras. Hsien's wish was to travel and convert and to stay without seeking for ease. So [he] stayed [at Lu-shan] a little over one year. Then, he went west to Chiang-ling 江陵.<sup>23</sup> He met foreign country boat masters and made inquiries. Indeed there were the five boats from India as [Buddhabhadra] had previously seen. Throughout the domain scholars and ordinary people one after the other came to pay respects [to him]. They respectfully made offerings, but [Hsien] did not receive any of them. When he held the alms bowl, he did not consider if the dānapati was rich or poor.<sup>24</sup>

At that time Yüan Pao 袁豹 of Ch'en chün 陳郡 was the ch'ang-shih 長史 (clerk) of the T'ai-wei 太尉 (Commander-in-chief; that is, Liu Yü), the (future) Emperor Wu of the [Liu] Sung (r. 420-422).

<sup>22</sup> Shih (1968), p. 94.

<sup>23</sup> This was around 412 A.D. Chiang-ling was up the Yangtzu River west from Lu shan. In I-hsi 義熙 8<sup>th</sup> year (412) Liu Yü, the future first emperor of the [Liu] Sung, had just defeated Liu Yi, a soldier of fortune, and taken over Chiang-ling. Tsukamoto (1985), p. 884. For map see Rhie (2002), map 1.2 on p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Shih (1968), p. 96.

After [Liu Yü, future Emperor Wu of Sung] defeated Liu Yi 劉毅 (d. 412) in the South, [Yüan] Pao accompanied [the T'ai-wei, Liu Yü] to Chiang ling 江陵. Hsien asked his disciple Hui-kuan 慧觀 to go to [Yüan] Pao and ask for food (beg for alms). [Yüan] Pao formerly was not a believer [in Buddhism], and he treated [Hui-kuan] very poorly. Without eating [the food], [Hui-kuan] declined. [Yüan] Pao said, "It seems to be insufficient." Further again allowed a small amount [of food]. Hsien said, "Dānapati has an offering mind with limit, therefore arranged what is exhausted (i.e., so little)." Then [Yüan] Pao immediately called his attendants to increase the food, and indeed the food was sufficient. [Yüan] Pao felt greatly ashamed. Then [Yüan] Pao asked Hui-kuan, "What kind of person is this monk?" Hui-kuan said, "His virtue is high and vast, extremely hard to measure." [Yüan] Pao was deeply surprised and informed the T'ai-wei (Liu Yü). The T'ai-wei asked to meet with him. Then [he] extremely respectfully looked up to him and offered sufficient assets. Then the T'ai-wei suddenly returned to the capital (Chien-k'ang), and he invited them all (i.e., Buddhahadra and his 40 followers) to return and peacefully stay at the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺. Hsien's deportment and regulations that he commonly followed were not the same as Chinese customs. In this regard, his inclinations were harmonious, pure, lofty and refined to extreme depth. The Dharma master of the capital, Seng-pi 僧弼 with the monk Pao-lin 寶林 wrote saying, "Tao-ch'ang meditation master has very high mind, therefore he has the elegance of an Indian king." His appearance is said to be like this. Previously, the monk Chih Fa-ling 支法領 at Yü-tien (Khotan) had obtained the first portion of the *Hua-yen [sutra]* 華嚴 (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*) in 36,000 verses, but it was not yet translated. In I-hsi 義熙 4<sup>th</sup> year, Wu-chün's Nei-shih (governor) 吳郡內史 Meng-I 孟顗 and the Right Wei-chiang-chün (General of the Right Guard) 右衛將軍 Chu Shu-tu 褚叔度 then asked Hsien to be the translation master. Then, holding the Sanskrit text, together with the monk Fa-yeh 法業 and Hui-yen 慧嚴 and others, more than 100 persons, at the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺, it was translated and put out. The words and meaning were explained and settled; the Chinese and Sanskrit were completely understood; and the sutra's meaning was deeply obtained. Therefore the Tao-ch'ang ssu still has the Hua-yen t'ang 華嚴堂 hall there. Also the monk Fa-hsien 法顯 had obtained from the Western Regions the Seng-chü-lü 僧祇律 Sanskrit version of the monk's vinaya. Hsien was also requested to translate this into Chin's 晉 language (Chinese).<sup>25</sup> This is recorded in [Fa]-hsien's biography. Around that time [Hsien] put out the *Kuan fo san-mei hai [ching]* 觀佛三昧海[經] in six chüan, the *Ni-huan* 泥洹 (*Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*),<sup>26</sup> and the *Hsiu hsing fang pien lun* 修行方便論 and others, altogether 15 pu in 117 chüan, investigating the deep purport, and the subtle and complete in words and meaning. In Yüan-chia 元嘉 6<sup>th</sup> year (429), Hsien died at age 71.<sup>27</sup>

The biography of Buddhahadra also appears in the *CSTCC*, but the information contained in that slightly earlier record is also contained in the *Kao-seng chuan* biography, translated above with very little difference. Altogether, the three records from the preceding section and these two biographies provide the known data concerning the translation of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* by Buddhahadra. With regard to interpreting the date, it would appear that the translation was begun in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 418 (Eastern Chin I-hsi 義熙 14<sup>th</sup> year) and completed by the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 420 (Yüan-hsi 元熙 2<sup>nd</sup> year), and that the collation/revision was completed by the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 422 ([Liu] Sung Yung-ch'ü 永初

<sup>25</sup> This is the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* in 40 chüan. Tsukamoto (1985), p. 884.

<sup>26</sup> The *Ni-huan ching* is a translation of a text brought back to China by Fa-hsien. It is to be distinguished from the text translated by Dharmakṣema in Liang chou, which is the *Ta po-nieh-p'an ching*. Further, there is also a "southern" text by Hsieh Ling-yün comparing both versions (i.e., the previous two translations). Tsukamoto (1985), p. 894.

<sup>27</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 2, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, (T 2059), pp. 334b-335c. Also see Shih (1968), pp. 90-98.

2<sup>nd</sup> year). It is perhaps most reasonable to make the interpretation that the translated text was not actually “published” or “put out” until the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 422, after the collation/revision was completed.

c) Buddhahadra’s Translation of the *Hua-yen ching* and the Paintings of the Ten-Direction Buddhas in Group 6

As determined from the three records translated above concerning the translation of the *Hua-yen ching*, the date of the completion of Buddhahadra’s translation of the 60-chüan *Hua-yen sutra* was the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 420 and the date of the completion of the collation (revision) with the Sanskrit text was the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 422. As mentioned above (and studied in detail below in section I.2.a.ii), the inscription for the Group 6 images and paintings is dated third month 24<sup>th</sup> day of either Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year (420) or to the year of Hsüan-hsiao (424) based on the stations of Jupiter. Both dates are quite close to the date when Buddhahadra’s translation of the *Hua-yen ching* was finished and when the collation (revision) with the foreign text was completed. This issue will be studied further below. It is, of course, possible that partial translations came out earlier and came to be known in Western Ch’in, or it may have been known through oral transmission by knowledgeable monks.<sup>28</sup> It can be noted, however, that the date of 424 would certainly seem more likely in light either of the date of completion of the translation in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 420 (too early for the *nien-hao* date of 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Chien-hung first year, 420) or of the completion of the collation and revision in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 424. This is one strong reason to think that the 424 *tz’u* date is the most plausible for the Group 6 inscription. There will be more discussion of this point below.

b. *Other Images near the Ten-Direction Buddhas*

Other paintings survive on the right wall of the niche on both sides of the ten-direction Buddhas (Fig. 7.2). These are prime remains of painted images and will be examined in detail.

i. A Guardian and an Offering Figure

To the left (facing) of this group of ten-direction Buddhas there is one standing guardian figure dressed in military garb (Figs. 7.5a, b). He appears to be wearing a crown and to have a round face with black hair. Part of a stand-up collar in white color appears around his neck and the left and right arms still show remains of flaring short sleeves. His left arm (and possibly also the right) appears to be akimbo with the hand on the hip. The coat-like outer wear (mostly in malachite green) is tight at the waist where there is a white band, and flares out slightly to the knees with three bands of decoration (green, red and white) at the hem, just above the knee level. The warrior-dressed figure may have been wearing puffy pantaloons which are cinched over green leggings. His legs are spread far apart in a bold standing position. Possibly his left leg bears his weight and the right either steps to the side or is slightly raised. This figure appears rather similar to the guardian figures of “Style I” at Rawak Stupa (Fig. 7.6), which probably date ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century as discussed in Vol. I.<sup>29</sup> This figure seems to be accompanying the ten-direction Buddhas and may stand for the directional guardian Kings of the Four Quarters.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Chang Pao-hsi notes that there were 10-some versions of the *Hua-yen sutra* already propagated in China, but these were generally just certain chapters or fragments of the text. Chang (1992), p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 295-296.

<sup>30</sup> A short (one chüan) sutra entitled the *Fo-shuo ssu T’ien-wang ching* 佛說四天王經 (*Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 590) and Korean Catalogue K 856), was translated by Chih-yen and Pao-yün in ca. 427 (Yüan-chia 4<sup>th</sup> year) of the [Liu] Sung at the Chih-yüan ssu in Yang-tu. Though this translation dates a few years later than the Group 6 images, it does reveal the interest in the T’ien-wang guardian images around this time.

Above, in the remnant of the ceiling of the niche, is the remains of a figure with dark hair, large round face with well defined features, narrow shoulders, a V-shaped opening in the robe and a circular head halo (Figs. 7.1, 7.2, 7.3a). Both hands appear to be holding up an offering vessel. A long scarf comes from around the left shoulder and over the crook of the left arm; its long trailing end part, showing a striped design, curves around in the air off to the right behind the figure. Portions of a white lotus with its large petals facing upward suggest that this figure may be sitting on a lotus as the representation of a reborn being in Sukhāvati. Similar depictions occur in the Koguryō wall paintings of Chang-chōn tomb No. 1 of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 7.7).<sup>31</sup> In this case, it would accompany the main theme of the niche, of Amitāyus, and indicate an aspect of the Buddha land of Sukhāvati as described in the major Amitābha/Amitāyus sutras. In the background around the offering image or reborn being there is a lot of malachite green, possibly suggestive of water or of the ground of the Buddha land in general, but this is not clear.

ii. Śākyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Bodhisattva

The standing Śākyamuni Buddha painting at the right side of the niche is relatively large, but considerably damaged (Figs. 7.1 and 7.8). Most of the head, right arm and left foot areas are lost. The image is also not well reproduced because it appears on a part of the wall surface that is uneven and curved. The right hand was probably in the abhayā mudrā; his left hand grasps the edge of his robe with elegant long fingers as the hand is bent outward revealing the palm (Fig. 7.1). The feet seem to be placed rather far apart in a vigorous pose with the left leg stretched towards the side as though the weight is shifted to the right leg. The form is tall and slender with somewhat narrow, sloping shoulders. The saṅghāṭī appears to have been red (now dark) with edges in malachite green. The cowl around the neck appears to lack a twist, but to have a curved, but flat shape. The ends of the robe hang behind the left arm making a sequence of rather loose, wavy hems just behind the left elbow. There seems to be a similar sequence of loose wavy hem on the inner side of the left arm. From behind the left hand the hems flare diagonally straight and stiffly outward with a clear, double-sided, rather refined, curvilinear zigzag patterning that increases in size as it nears the end. A similar patterning of hems falls from the raised right arm (Fig. 7.1). This model seems to be used prevalently in paintings during the mid and later 5<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the wall paintings at Tun-huang. The under robe flares out stiffly and with straight rather than curved edges. There is a wide band at the bottom. The drawing in Fig. 7.1 indicates the long, sweeping curved inner fold lines across the body from the raised right arm to the lower left leg. This imparts a graceful movement to the drapery which would accord very well with Chinese taste and aesthetics, a further indication of the highly indigenous Chinese style of these wall paintings in Group 6.

The mandorla contains a circular head halo of concentric bands and outer rim of delicate, wavy white flames (not shown in the drawing in Fig. 7.1, but visible in Fig. 7.8). The body halo portion of the mandorla has similar bands and outer rim of delicate, white, wavy flame patterns. The canopy over the head of the image is quite elaborate with a jewel ornament at the top and a sectioned dome with a flared ruffled edge using paired lines suggestive of stripes. The circular lotus pedestal shows some seed pod holes and plain upward lotus petals that are shown encircling the entire pedestal in front and back.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 232-238 and figs. 1.75a-k.

<sup>32</sup> There is some discrepancy in the various published drawings of this image, including the design of the lotus petals, but the drawing in Fig. 7.1 appears the most accurate.



The standing Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 7.9a), which appears between the mandorla of the Te-ta-shih-chih sculpture and that of the painting of Śākyamuni (Fig. 7.1, 7.2), is about half the size of the Śākyamuni painting. The colophon label with the name “Mi-lo p’u-sa” 彌勒菩薩 (Maitreya Bodhisattva) appears above the right shoulder. The right hand is raised to the chest and the left is lowered with the hand possibly holding something near the left hip.<sup>33</sup> The image is slender and graceful with round head halo, long, wavy, malachite green scarf, armbands and long jewel chain worn asymmetrically over the chest. The dark (possibly originally red) dhoti appears to have the knots of a scarf tied at each side at the waist with the ends flaring outward in points to knee length at each side. This fashion derives from the Indian mode of tying a chest scarf around the hips as a casual way of wearing. It appears in some early sculptures, including the Group 22 Bodhisattva in Fig. 5.53. However, this feature does not last long in the repertoire of Bodhisattva dress in China.

The long shawl circles behind the head in front of the head halo and balloons slightly around the elbows as it moves in large curves away from the body at both sides. The ends split into two points, each of which has a few wavy, zigzag hems. The folds of the long shawl, which is quite prominent in this figure, are drawn with even, rather delicate and rather closely spaced parallel black lines. The shawl seems light and further imparts a sense of movement to the figure, which also has a very slight sway in the lithe body.

The crown, mostly ruined, has some of the central jewel plaque remaining. Ends of a kerchief-like covering (also seen in the Group 17 Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.26a) appears at the sides and narrow white crown ribbons can still be seen flying vertically upward in large arcs from both sides of the crown. The later feature becomes more exaggerated in examples from the Tun-huang cave paintings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century under the Northern Wei. The choker necklace has a central circular pendant jewel, and the long, double strand (gold?) necklace with two circular ornaments falls low on the chest. The earrings are several circular rings within an oval shape. They are somewhat similar to the earrings of the Group 22 Bodhisattva (Fig. 5.53) and the armbands and bracelets are virtually the same as those on the two Bodhisattva sculptures of the Group 6 niche (Figs. 6.14b, 6.15b).

The circular head halo has a wide, white outer band and green inner area. The image stands on a circular lotus pedestal that is similar to those of the Bodhisattva sculptures of Group 6. From the drawing in Fig. 7.1 it appears that the seed pods are depicted in the center and there is one row of smooth, downturned lotus petals. Three green lotus buds and a flaming jewel dot the space at the image’s left side. The flaming jewel is an interesting form using close parallel black lines like a fringe around the edge of the white, oval-shaped ground representing the glow of the jewel (Figs. 7.1 and 7.9a). This is an early form of the flaming jewel and is similar to some examples in the wall paintings of Kizil, such as seen in Caves 38 and 47. The technique is especially similar to that used in the halo of a Jātaka scene in the ceiling painting of Kizil Cave 14 (Fig. 4.22b). This is certainly one small but nevertheless interesting linkage that helps to confirm the dating of Kizil Cave 14 to ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup>

The painting style of these two important paintings is delicate and quite linear. There are some indications of similarities with the wall paintings of some caves in Kizil, such as already noted with the technique of the flaming jewel matching with the halo style in a painting in Kizil Cave 14. In addition

<sup>33</sup> According to Chang Pao-hsi, “The painted surface is not clear; the left hand is placed on the belly and it seems to be holding the robe or edges of the cloth.” Chang (1992), p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 683-691, where this cave is studied and dated to ca. last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or early 5<sup>th</sup> century.



there is a sense of movement in the posture and scarves of the Maitreya Bodhisattva that has similarity with the painting style of Kizil Cave 4 (Fig. 7.9b), a cave which can probably be considered as dating around the same general time. Nevertheless, overall, a sophisticated Chinese adaptation pervades the Group 6 images in both form and execution. This difference, which appears between the Buddha images as well (Figs. 7.1 and 7.9b) appears to be a Chinese aesthetic that might relate to elements of painting style from the Eastern Chin in the South. The willowy grace of the figure and the refined delicacy of the linear style, which is lighter and more fluid than the styles of the Kizil wall paintings, and, in the Śākyamuni image, shows more interest in the linear patterning of the folds of the robe than the Cave 4 painting (Fig. 7.9b), would seem to connote a strongly Chinese interpretation, perhaps based on painting styles in the South such as known in Ku K'ai-chih's paintings.

Also, there is possibly some relation with the stylistic elements in the art of the Khotan area of this time. The standing Bodhisattvas at Rawak stupa near Khotan of Style VI (ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> to first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century), as seen in the smaller sculptures placed in between the monumental standing Buddhas in Fig. 6.9b have some similarities in the long slender proportions of the body and in the type of choker necklace and long chest necklace. However, the Maitreya Bodhisattva of the Group 6 painting is much simpler and more fluid and lacks the rounded form and combed type lines of the dhoti. Nevertheless, it is possible that there are some links with the art of the Khotan region and with the Kizil paintings.

A strong contrast between the Group 6 Maitreya is afforded by the standing Maitreya in the "Chi-te" stone stupa from Tun-huang dating ca. 426 (Figs. 7.9c, d). The "Chi-te" miniature stone stupa is the only one among the group of stone stupas from Liang chou and Turfan from ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (these important stupas will be studied in detail in Vol. IV of this series), to present the Maitreya Bodhisattva in a standing posture (others examples are cross-ankled). Interestingly, the hand positions are very similar to those of the Group 6 painting in Fig. 7.9a, with, unfortunately, a similar ambiguity concerning the left hand. Stylistically, however, the "Chi-te" image (inscribed as Mi-lo fo) has the robust form and posture associated with another painting style tradition and more akin to the examples in Groups 12, 13 and 14 on the North Wall of Cave 169.

The Śākyamuni and Maitreya Bodhisattva wall paintings of Group 6 provide a rare glimpse of the Chinese adaptation of some Central Asian styles and motifs, but have modified them to such a degree within a Chinese artistic conception that the paintings are what we can truly accept as a refined, new, Chinese interpretation of the Buddha and Bodhisattva image. This interpretation is probably based upon models that were evolving in Eastern Chin and [Liu] Sung in the South. This subject will be addressed further below in relation to the donor paintings around the main inscription.

### iii. Stylistic and Iconographic Considerations in the Context of the Group 6 Niche

The painting of Śākyamuni and Maitreya Bodhisattva is obviously an important part of the configuration of the Group 6 niche. They appear to present a related pair, but each also has some sense of independence. Images of Śākyamuni together with Maitreya Bodhisattva occur in Gandhāran art, but they are rare. There are examples of them seated back to back,<sup>35</sup> or standing side by side as equals in a pair,<sup>36</sup> but it is not certain in the latter case whether or not the pair is complete or is part of a set of eight images (the seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva), such as seen in the Takht-i-Bāhī relief in Fig. 3.14b. In Chinese art standing Maitreya Bodhisattvas are known from ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Western

<sup>35</sup> Kurita (2003), II, figs. 299 and 301.

<sup>36</sup> Kurita (2003), II, fig. 83.

Chin)<sup>37</sup> and early Eastern Chin (Fig. 2.3). A standing image inscribed as Maitreya Bodhisattva (Mi-lo p'u-sa) is seen in the miniature stone stupa of "Chi-te" from Tun-huang datable to ca. 426 A.D. (Figs. 7.9b, c), where the figure is one of the eight in the set of seven Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva commonly seen in the groups of stone stupas (shih-t'a) from central and western Kansu and from Turfan around the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In the "Chi-te" stone stupa the standing Maitreya's right hand is in the abhayā mudrā and the left arm hangs down, and it seems that it is holding both a bottle and its scarf, but it is not entirely clear. Stylistically, the Maitreya Bodhisattva in the "Chi-te" stone stupa from Tun-huang is much more robust than the elegantly drawn Maitreya of the Group 6 wall painting. This shows differing artistic modes or traditions at approximately the same time period. As we will continue to see in subsequent volumes dealing with central and western Kansu, those areas tend to have different artistic lineages than the imagery in Cave 169 under the Western Ch'in. This may in part be a factor of the political and military circumstances and the enmity and rivalry between the Western Ch'in in eastern Kansu and the Northern Liang in central and western Kansu at this time.

In the context of the Group 6 niche, the Śākyamuni Buddha painting is large and prominent and obviously important in relation to the other paintings and even with the sculptures of this niche. Considering this, it is possible that the Śākyamuni and Maitreya form a pair that has a close relation with the other components of the niche. We have already seen in the study offered in Chapter 6 that the triad of sculptures in the niche are in accord with the text of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, probably translated by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün and put out in 422 A.D.<sup>38</sup> Maitreya Bodhisattva figures prominently in a major portion at the end of the last chüan of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* where Śākyamuni is directly speaking to Maitreya (who is named many times) and others in his teaching of the five evils and five goods,<sup>39</sup> as well as in the section on the questions and answers between Maitreya and Śākyamuni regarding the two kinds of rebirth.<sup>40</sup> Maitreya is also specifically mentioned in the last sentence of the sutra: "As the Buddha ended pronouncing this sutra, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the assembly of bodhisattvas who had gathered from the ten regions of the universe, the elder Ānanda, all the great disciples, and all those who had gathered in this vast crowd, having heard what the Buddha said, all without exception rejoiced."<sup>41</sup>

In the case of the Group 6 niche it would appear reasonable to see both Śākyamuni and Maitreya Bodhisattva as part of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* text. However, it should also be noted that they could be a totally independent insertion, simply as being an important element in Chinese Buddhism of that time and perhaps desired by the donors to be included as major independent icons without special reference to a specific text. Since the ten-direction Buddha painting is linked to the *Hua-yen ching*, it is clear that there is not a single textual source for the configurations of this Group 6 presentation.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the linkage with the *Wu-liang-shou ching* seems the most probable and reasonable.

<sup>37</sup> The Fujii Yürinkan bronze image—see Rhie (1999), fig. 2.32.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 6, sections II.A.2.a. no. 2) and II.A.4 for discussion on the issues involving the translation date of this text.

<sup>39</sup> Gomez (1996), pp. 205-215; Inagaki and Stewart (2003), pp. 46-64.

<sup>40</sup> Gomez (1996), pp. 217-219; Inagaki and Stewart (2003), pp. 66-70.

<sup>41</sup> Gomez (1996), p. 222.

<sup>42</sup> Chang Pao-hsi discusses the possible textual basis for the Śākyamuni and Maitreya Bodhisattva primarily in terms of the *Hua-yen sutra*. He understands this pair to probably represent one of the eight assemblies of the *Hua-yen sutra* as seen in the 60-chüan version translated by Buddhahadra (though he also notes that it could have been known from some of the earlier, partial translations). He does not consider the *Wu-liang-shou ching* in regard to this pair. Chang (1992), p. 14.

## 2. Group 6: Main Inscription and Surrounding Wall Paintings

This section examines the main inscription and the wall paintings (most with surviving inscriptions in colophons) found on the right wall outside the Group 6 niche with the sculptures (Figs. 7.1 and 7.8).

### a. Main Inscription

Wrapping around the wall at the height of the Amitāyus Buddha's head and just outside the contours of the Amitāyus niche on the right side (facing) is a horizontal rectangular area (H. 47 cm x W. 87 cm [18½" x 34¼"]) with a white ground containing a long black ink inscription (Figs. 6.7, 7.1, 7.8, 7.10a). This is the now famous inscription that was discovered in 1963. Prior to this discovery this inscription was not known in Chinese historical records.<sup>43</sup> It has been studied several times over the intervening years with differing readings, mainly occasioned by the extremely fragmentary condition of the inscription. The latter part was better preserved than the opening parts because it was protected from damage (mainly by birds) by the convex surface of the wall. It is the last line of the inscription that contains the date (Fig. 7.10a, b, c).

### i. Description and Translation

In 1992 Chang Pao-hsi re-recorded the inscription and made a contour drawing of the writing (Fig. 7.10b). Altogether there are 21 lines and every line has between 22-24 characters. Originally there were about 500-some characters; the reading presented by Chang Pao-hsi has 230 some characters (less than half of the original).<sup>44</sup> He remarks that some of the characters are old forms, such as ling (spirit) and there are some cases of a popular or secular manner of expression (i.e., not high class usage).

Little sense can be made of most of the inscription.<sup>45</sup> There are, however, such references as: the "group of believers raised the image;" "Maitreya's worldly model" 慈容世范; "then requested the profound master [artist] to make Maitreya Bodhisattva image's supernatural appearance to be outstanding and splendid" 遂請妙匠容茲尊像神姿琦茂; and "making the Maitreya image to be a wonderful and splendid image." Chang Pao-hsi suggests that the beginning of the inscription may have presented the cause of the donor's making and the latter portion presents verses. The last two lines appear to be a series of four character phrases.<sup>46</sup>

No reference to Amitāyus remains among the characters, but there is apparent reference to Maitreya (referred to as tzu 茲 [should be tz'u 慈] tsun 尊 and Tz'u shih 慈氏 in the portion near the end.

<sup>43</sup> Chang (1992), p. 11. The inscription was subsequently examined in 1974 by Ma Shih-ch'ang, Hwang Chin-shih and Wang Wen-ch'ing. In 1980 it was examined again by others from the Tun-huang Research Institute and from the Kansu Wen-wu group, and Chang Pao-hsi. The various readings of the characters in the inscription were not all completely the same and not consistently matching.

<sup>44</sup> Chang (1992), pp. 11-12.

<sup>45</sup> Some letters can be made out, but most are simply isolated characters or short groups that do not present a coherent text. Translating some of those disparate characters is as follows: "barbarian...pointing...song...finished, hands together in worship...transformed image...boat follow the step...spiritual halo...world...adequate???...and quietude...group of people believing...raised the image...to raise enlightenment...???then asked profound master maker making figures this honorable image...supernatural form outstanding...with causation four lives...sandalwood extreme come to early wishing respectfully...served cannot read and sighing...complete...sound, spiritual...image then soul is comfortable and light?? subtly coming traces following transforming living reason trace change rise...blindly go into so confusion...world standard...shadow path axis who respect who further...spiritual matching, beautiful and gorgeous, wide...circular transforming opportunity then subtle skillful supernatural austere...holy scene... Chien-hung yüan nien year in Hsüan-hsiao third month 24<sup>th</sup> day made." Chang (1992), pp. 11-12.

<sup>46</sup> Chang (1992), p. 12.

These references could refer to the Maitreya Bodhisattva painting on the right side (facing) of the niche (Fig. 7.1). It is possible that Amitāyus was referred to earlier in the inscription and is now missing, and that the other depictions, namely the painting portions of the niche, were being referred to in the latter part of the inscription where more characters survive. The very last line ends with the date, which is fortunately clearly preserved:

?? Chien-hung yüan nien sui tsai hsüan-hsiao san yüeh nien-ssu jih tsao” 口口建弘元年歲在玄枵三月廿四日造 (Chien-hung first year in Hsüan-hsiao, third month, 24<sup>th</sup> day made).

There is both a *nien-hao* date (Chien-hung first year 建弘元年, which is a Western Ch'in *nien-hao* whose first year is equivalent to 420 A.D.), and a *tz'u* 次 year (calculations based on the stations of Jupiter) of Hsüan-hsiao 玄枵 (“Murky Hollow”), followed by the third month, 24<sup>th</sup> day.

According to the *Chin shu*, chüan 11:<sup>47</sup>

自須女八度至危十五度爲玄枵，於辰在子...

“From hsü (hui or mei?) nü 須女 (Waiting Maid, a star in Aquarius; also called Woman of the Lunar Lodging) eight degrees (pa tu 八度) to Wei 危 (Roof of the Lunar Lodging) 15 degrees, is Hsüan-hsiao 玄枵 (Murky Hollow of the Jupiter Station); with regard to the ch'en 辰 (animal cycle “chronogram”), it is in Tz'u 子 (“Rat” of the animal cycle)....”

The twelve *ch'en* 辰 are the “chronograms”<sup>48</sup> demarcating the divisions of the celestial sphere (t'ien-ch'u 天球) in ancient Chinese astronomy. The *ch'en* are read on the celestial sphere from East to West. The twelve *tz'u* 次 (star orbits according to the stations of Jupiter) orbit around the Celestial Sphere in twelve years (using the stations of Jupiter for the calculations) moving from West to East. “Hsüan-hsiao” is one of the twelve *tz'u* and it matches with the *ch'en* of the Rat (Tz'u 子). Further, the twelve earthly branches (*ti-chih* 地支) correspond to the twelve *ch'en* divisions. Therefore, Hsüan-hsiao, which is in the *ch'en* 辰 of Tz'u 子 (Rat), corresponds to the earthly branch of Tz'u 子. With regard to the Group 6 inscription, the “Tz'u” (Rat) earthly branch closest to the period of the *nien-hao* of Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year (420) is Chia-tz'u 甲子, which is 424 A.D. A Chia-tz'u 甲子 cyclic date of 424 would correspond to Chien-hung 5<sup>th</sup> year.

The discrepancy between the Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year *nien-hao* and the Hsüan-hsiao of the *ch'en* (chronograms), was possibly caused by some mistake, perhaps even by one as simple as the miswriting of the character yüan 元 (first) instead of wu 五 (five) for some reason. However, it needs to be noticed that the Group 6 inscription interestingly uses only the Jupiter cycle Hsüan-hsiao in addition to the *nien-hao* of Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year. It does not use the 60 year cyclic dates (*kan-chih* 干支) or the Lunar Lodgings (*hsiu* 宿).<sup>49</sup>

Scholars including Teng Yü-hsiang and Chang Pao-hsi have generally accepted the date to be the *nien-hao* date of Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year (420 A.D.) under the Western Ch'in. Since there is no ambiguity in the reading of the character “yüan” (first year of Chien-hung) in the inscription, that date (420) is

<sup>47</sup> *Chin shu*, 10 volumes, Peking: chung-hua shu chü ch'u-pan, 1972, chüan 11, (volume 2), p. 308.

<sup>48</sup> Schafer (1977), p. 76: “I have used the word ‘chronogram’ to translate the awkward word *ch'en* 辰, which, most commonly, represents the asterisms recognized by the Chinese along the paths of the planets and the moon across the sky, that is, the ‘Twelve Stations’ (*tz'u* 次) of Jupiter on the ecliptic, analogous to the twelve signs of our zodiac, and the Twenty-eight Lunar Lodgings (*hsiu* 宿) or nakshatras.” (italics and characters are mine).

<sup>49</sup> We have seen how both the *tz'u* (Jupiter cycle) and the *kan-chih* were used in records 2) and 3) noted above on page 263 with regard to the dating of the Buddhahadra translation of the *Hua-yen ching* in conjunction with the *nien-hao* date to provide a matching date that substantiated the *nien-hao* date, but for some reason that is not the case in the Group 6 main inscription, probably because of some original error or mistake.

taken to be the operative and primary date.<sup>50</sup> There has, however, also been some brief discussion by Japanese scholars concerning the date of the *tz'u* (Jupiter cycle) year, Hsüan-hsiao,<sup>51</sup> and recent references to the date of the Group 6 wall paintings tend to use both dates.

ii. Regarding the 420/424 Date Issue

Because the *tz'u* designation according to the Jupiter cycle is very ancient in China (attributed to the Yellow Emperor), it has long-standing usage in China. It is also a reliable calculation system. It is based on twelve years, which is a simpler and less changeable or variable system than the 60 year cycle (*kan-chih*) and much more reliable than the *nien-hao* system, which changes with the will of the ruler and is erratic and may not be known throughout a kingdom as easily as the traditional systems of the *tz'u* 12 year cycle and the 60 year *kan-chih* cycle. In the case of the inscription of Group 6 where there is apparently not a match between the *nien-hao* and the *tz'u* dates, the *tz'u* date has to be taken seriously and should be of equal, if not greater, credulity than the *nien-hao* as the date of make. Since the two readings are quite close, it does not make a critical difference with regard to the art remains, but it could make some important difference with respect to the historical import of some pertinent Buddhist translations of texts, as will become clear in the ensuing discussions below where further reason is presented to think that the later, i.e., the 424 date, is probably more likely as the authentic original date.

The Group 6 inscriptional record nevertheless stands as a major landmark and guidepost for the study of early fifth century Buddhist art in China with a certain date of 424 (or 420). With so few definite markers, this one is an oasis in the desert in that it also contains many important and excellent remains of sculptures and wall paintings that are associated with it. This dated record and its associated sculptures and paintings have ramifications far beyond the locale of Cave 169, for which it is also an essential element in stabilizing the chronology of the art in the that cave, that extend, as we shall see in subsequent volumes of this study, to understanding the art and Buddhist movements of other regions of Kansu and China as well. This inscription provides added prestige and importance to a group of sculptures and paintings which even on their own account are truly high quality expressions of the Buddhist art in China around the mid 420's and become treasured remains from the local dynasty of the Western Ch'in in the southeastern region of Kansu.

b. Donor Figures

The donors of the Amitāyus niche and surrounding wall paintings are an extremely interesting group of monks and lay persons. They appear in two rows directly beneath the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao

<sup>50</sup> Chang (1986), p. 197: "...instead of the cyclic name used in the 16 Kingdoms period sutras, they used the star name (Hsüan-hsiao), the year of chia-tz'u in the cyclic year name, which is Chien-hung 5<sup>th</sup> year, 424. A number of scholars studied this in detail. There is no mistake with the "yüan", so why does the star year not correspond? This problem should find its reason somewhere else. In Chang (1992), p. 12 he says: "At the end of the inscription it says "Chien-hung yüan nien, year of Hsüan-hsiao, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day made." According to the reading of the Hsüan-hsiao (*tz'u* date), it must correspond to chia-tz'u cyclic date and must be Chien-hung 5<sup>th</sup> year (424 A.D.). Chang cites K. Higashiyama, *Tun-huang yen chiu*, 1991, No. 1, footnote 8. Chang then continues: "Since the 'yüan-nien' two characters are clear, it should be taken to be Chien-hung yüan nien." In the final analysis, Chang Pao-hsi accepts the *nien-hao* date (420 A.D.).

<sup>51</sup> Higashiyama, Kenjō, "Tun-huang Mo-kao-ku fo shu hsia shuo fa t'u hsing shih ti wai lai", *Tun-huang yen chiu*, 1991, No. 1, p. 55, note 8. Fukuyama, Toshio, "Heirinji sekkutsu no seishin zōzōmei ni tsuite," *Bijutsu Kenkyū*, No. 276, (1971), pp. 33-35.



inscription and in one row beneath the Śākyamuni and Maitreya paintings inside the niche (Figs. 7.1, 7.8 and 7.11). According to Chang Pao-hsi, altogether 21 donors are remaining.<sup>52</sup> In addition there are some paintings and inscriptions in areas above the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription and below the two rows underneath the inscription. Most all of the figures and colophons are fragmentary, but enough remains to discern their importance. Each donor person in the three main rows (two rows below the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription and one inside the niche) was originally depicted facing towards the Amitāyus statue in the niche and was accompanied by a colophon label that identified the person. The figures are painted mostly in malachite green and white with black lines and some touches of red. The reading of the colophons presented here follows that given by Chang Pao-hsi, Wei Wen-pin and Wang Wan-ch'ing.<sup>53</sup> The figures are read from left to right (facing), which is the protocol direction of their procession towards the Amitāyus Buddha in the niche.

#### i. First Row of Donors

This row is immediately below the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription. It shows two monks in the lead followed by at least five lay persons whose colophons remain but are very difficult to see (Figs. 7.1, 7.11), so we rely on the reports of the investigators.<sup>54</sup>

1) *Hu (?) kuo ta-ch'an-shih T'an-ma-pi chih hsiang* 護(?)國大禪師曇摩毘之像 (Image of Protecting the Nation Great Meditation Master T'an-ma-pi)<sup>55</sup>

This colophon appears above the right shoulder of the lead monk in this row (Figs. 7.12a, b, 7.14a). The painting of this image is partially preserved. He is shown facing three-quarters to his right as though walking. His head has the black close-cropped hair of a monk and sweeping black eyebrows. Interestingly, the shadow of his beard is portrayed in malachite green. The line drawing and the coloring of his beard appear similar to the technique used to depict monks in the Kizil wall paintings.<sup>56</sup> Though there is not an exact example of a monk image still surviving in Kizil Cave 14, the style of the paintings in this cave and in Cave 4, both of which appear to date around the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, are especially close in brush technique with the painting of the monks in this section of Group 6.

The outer robe of T'an-ma-pi appears to be malachite green in portions; it flares stiffly outward toward the right (facing) at a dramatic angle from his lowered left hand, and there is a green hem band on both hems of his outer and inner robe. His body is white. He has a long right arm bent at the elbow and stretching across his chest. The contour drawing in moderate tone black ink is skillfully done in the Chinese style of brush work (that is, it is not the same kind of line drawing as seen in Indian or Central Asian paintings, but has the soft modulation of the Chinese brush line). The right hand is somewhat emphatically but gracefully bent backwards and the fingers appear to grasp an object. He wears the black slipper-like shoes of a monk. A large green and white lotus bud on a long, slender stalk appears lower down above his right foot. Other, smaller lotus buds are partly preserved: one hovers above his left shoulder, another is at his left side and yet another appears between his feet. The drawing of this

<sup>52</sup> Chang (1992), p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Chang (1992), pp. 14-15; Wei Wen-pin (1994), pp. 5-6; Wang Wan-ch'ing, "169 k'u t'i chi k'ao shih" (Examination of the Inscriptions in Cave 169), in Teng (1994), p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Chang (1992), p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> These include Cave 38 (ca. mid 4<sup>th</sup> century) and Cave 48 (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century). See Rhie (2002), figs. 4.52c, 4.55e.



image appears refined and competent with some variation in the ink tone of the lines and a sense of angular and tense design combined with fluid and soft, even line drawing typical of a Chinese artist.

T'an-ma-pi is a famous foreign monk known from the biography of the Chinese monk Hsüan-kao 玄高 in the *Kao-seng chuan* (see full translation in Chapter 1, section II.C, pp. 21-26). In the portion of the biography which relates Hsüan-kao's stay at Mai-chi shan and his meditation practices there, the record recounts the presence of other famous monks there at the same time:

"... At this time Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (r. 412-428) controlled (literally, "straddled") the territory between Lung-hsi and the Liang territory in the west. There was a foreign country's meditation master (ch'an-shih 禪師), T'an-wu-pi 曇無毘 (same as T'an-ma-pi), who came to this country (i.e., Western Ch'in). He led his followers and established a group and instructed them in the meditation method. T'an-wu-pi came to Mai-chi shan (where Hsüan-kao was studying at the time) with his followers who were training in meditation." Later, the same record states that T'an-wu-pi left Mai-chi shan and returned "west to live among the foreigners." From the context we can surmise that T'an-wu-pi decided to leave Mai-chi shan, where he may have had some rivalry with Hsüan-kao.<sup>57</sup>

From the image and colophon inscription with the Group 6 paintings dating 424 (or 420), we know that T'an-wu [ma]-pi was a prominent monk (titled as a Protector of the Nation and Great Meditation Master) in Western Ch'in at the time of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an ca. 424 (or 420) and that he was a donor of the Amitāyus niche along with others, some or all of whom were likely to have been his followers. He is also likely to have been at Ping-ling ssu at the time of the dedication of the niche and was probably very influential in leading people to be donors for this niche, considering he is the lead monk in the most important position among the donor figures. From both text records and from this painting and its accompanying inscriptions and colophons we have a match which confirms the presence of the foreign monk T'an-wu [ma]-pi, a noted meditation master (Wai-kuo Ch'an-shih) as mentioned in the *Kao-seng chuan* and "Protector (?) of the Nation, Great Meditation Master" (Hu (?) kuo Ta Ch'an-shih) as stated in the colophon inscription of Group 6 in Cave 169. No doubt he was considered a prominent person by the Western Ch'in ruler (Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an) and his family, one of whom seems to appear in an inscription below the second row. This is indeed a fortuitous matching that allows us to catch a glimpse of the personages and events surrounding the making of this Amitāyus niche and to illuminate the wider context of Buddhist affairs and historical events under the Western Ch'in around 420/424.

## 2) Pi-ch'iu Tao-jung chih hsiang 比丘道融之像 (Image of the bhikṣu Tao-jung)<sup>58</sup>

This image is just behind that of T'an-ma-pi. There is black ink writing in the colophon above his right shoulder (Fig. 7.12a). The figure is presented in a more frontal position than T'an-ma-pi, and also has a dramatic striding posture with feet widely apart (Figs. 7.1, 7.14a). Only the chin and jaw line of his face survives, but a patch of malachite green indicates he also had the green shadow of his beard similar to T'an-ma-pi. His body is also white color. Much of the shape of his robed body is still discernable. His outer robe ("kasa") has malachite green trim and edging, including the portion over the left arm. The lower hem of the white under-robe shows a checkerboard design (and there appears to be the dark hem of another robe beneath that). He, too, is wearing black slipper-like monk's shoes. His

<sup>57</sup> *Kao-seng chuan*, chüan 11, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, p. 397a-b.

<sup>58</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 5.

right arm is held up to the right side of his chest and he seems to be holding a bowl of lotus buds as offering in his right hand. His left arm is angled downward and the left hand appears to grasp part of his outer robe.

This figure is most likely to be the famous Tao-jung 道融 whose biography appears in the *Kao-seng chuan*, though it is not absolutely certain.<sup>59</sup> Tao-jung (with the same characters) has already been mentioned above with respect to the inscription with the Śākyamuni and Prabhūtarana painting in the thousand Buddha painting of Group 24 of the East Wall of Cave 169 (see above, Chapter 5, section I.B. pp.125-129). His biography relates how he came to Ch'ang-an to study with Kumārajīva, was known as an expounder of the *Lotus Sutra*, and became renowned for winning a debate with a foreign heterodox master from Sri Lanka. It was suggested in the earlier discussion above that Tao-jung likely could have come to Ping-ling ssu prior to his sojourn in Ch'ang-an and at that time been part of the group of meditating monks at Ping-ling ssu who became the donors of the Group 24 east wall thousand Buddha painting. It is likely that the Tao-jung of the Group 6 donor group is the same Tao-jung, who may have returned to Ping-ling ssu following the death of Kumārajīva (dates unknown, but around 410 or 413) or by the time of the collapse of Ch'ang-an in 418, first to the [Liu] Sung and then in 420 to Ho-lien Po-po of Ta Hsia. His biography states that later he "returned to P'eng ch'eng" in the South where he continued to lecture, often to more than 1,000 people, had more than 300 disciples and authored theoretical commentaries on major texts, including the "... *Fa-hua* 法華 (*Lotus Sutra*), the *Ta-p'in* 大品, the *Chin-kuang ming* 金光明 (*Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*), the *Shih-ti* 十地, the *Wei-mo* 維摩 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*) and others. All were popular in the world ..." He died at P'eng ch'eng at the age of 74. Even though Tao-jung in the Group 6 colophon is simply called "bhikṣu" and has no high title, he is nevertheless in a position of considerable importance just behind T'an-ma-pi. It is even possible that Tao-jung was a disciple or follower of T'an-ma-pi at that time. Whatever the case, he is clearly considered more importantly than in the East Wall inscription (of ca. 400 according to my study above), where he is simply listed as one among quite a few others, and not even at the front, but in the middle of the group. He was at that time a young monk, but by 420/424 he had already matured and become well known from his work and debate in Ch'ang-an under Kumārajīva, who, the biography states, highly respected him. Thus we can see his increased prominence in the Group 6 donors of 420/424, some 15-20 years later than the East Wall thousand Buddha painting inscription. Again, history and art appear to affirm each other and open a window onto the activities of the monks, donations and art of the Western Ch'in.

### 3) Five other figures in the first row

Following these two monk images there are the faint remains of five more donor figures who, according to Chang Pao-hsi, must be the primary lay donors of the Group 6 niche.<sup>60</sup> The partial remains of a colophon with the figure immediately following the Tao-jung image has the characters "... chih hsiang" 之像. Other figures and colophons can barely be made out; they appear to be male secular persons dressed like those in the row beneath (Figs. 7.1, 7.11).

<sup>59</sup> Chang Pao-hsi notes that it could also be the Tao-jung (same characters) who was a disciple of Hui-yüan at Lu shan in the south. Chang (1992), p. 15.

<sup>60</sup> Chang (1992), p. 15. He speculates that one of them may be Shih Liang of Nan-an. Cave 169 was customarily called "Shih Liang's cave", referring to one Shih Liang of Nan-an.

## ii. Second Row of Donors

This row, located just below the first row, has the remains of seven donor figures. They are led by two monks who are followed by one high official and four attendants (Figs. 7.1, 7.11). They are as follows:

1) Pi ????? 比丘□□□□□<sup>61</sup>

This shows a standing monk wearing the saṅghāṭī with the right shoulder bare. He also has black cropped hair and black shoes like the other monks. The outline of his face shows that he is looking directly outward. Part of the green hem of his outer robe and under robe can still be seen. According to Chang Pao-hsi, the colophon has the character “pi” (for bhikṣu) remaining, but it is difficult to see that in the published photographs. The lower part of this figure appears in the upper right corner of Fig. 7.13a.

2) Pi-ch’iu Hui-p’u chih hsiang 比丘慧普之像 (Image of bhikṣu Hui-p’u)<sup>62</sup>

The colophon of this monk appears next to his right shoulder (Figs. 7.1, 7.11). He faces three-quarters to his right and seems to also have the green shadow of a beard. Both hands are raised in front of his body and he is holding a dish of offerings (lotus buds?). His outer robe appears to be mostly of malachite green and the hem of the under robe is white. He wears the monk’s black shoes. He is seemingly not known from any other written records.

3) Po-shih Nan-an Yao Ch’ing-tzu chih hsiang 博士南安姚慶子之像 (Image of the Gentleman (Po-shih)<sup>63</sup>, Yao Ch’ing-tzu of Nan-an)<sup>64</sup>

This donor is a male figure of high status from Nan-an (See map, Fig. 1.1), an area then controlled by the Western Ch’in. The colophon appears next to his right shoulder. He is dressed in a long robe with full sleeves and wears large shoes which curve up in front. The edge of his robe is malachite green and the curved shoes are white in the center and green at the edges. This figure is not wearing ethnic dress, but rather attire that resembles the Han Chinese large robe clothing. This would indicate that the upper classes in Western Ch’in at this time were customarily wearing Han Chinese dress rather than the “hu” ethnic style clothing. He holds the stem of a lotus bud in his left hand (Fig. 7.1).

4) Shih-sheng Kuang-ning Na Fei chih hsiang 侍生廣寧那斐之像 (Image of the Attendant (shih-sheng),<sup>65</sup> Kuang-ning (place), Na Fei)<sup>66</sup>

This is an attendant to the Nan-an Po-shih Yao Ch’ing-tzu in the preceding. He wears similar robes, but his hands are placed together inside the sleeves and held respectfully in front of his chest. His robe is completely green in color. The colophon is in front of him near his right shoulder (Fig. 7.1).

<sup>61</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Western Chin (265/85-317 A.D.) established this title, but it is not yet clear what position or occupation it was. Chang (1992), p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> This is generally a junior position, in the order of an attendant or follower. Chang (1992), p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

5) Shih-sheng T'ien-shui Liang Po [Pai]-hsi chih hsiang 侍生天水梁伯熙之像 (Image of the Attendant (shih-sheng), Liang Po [Pai]-hsi of T'ien-shui)<sup>67</sup>

This figure is greatly faded, but appears to be portrayed in the same manner as the previous figure. He comes, however, from T'ien-shui (see Map in Fig. 1.1) rather than Nan-an, but, like the preceding two donors, he is from out of town. This group appears to have come together not because they live in the same area but because they wanted to do something special together for some reason at this site, which is actually not far from Fu-han, the capital of the Western Ch'in at that time.

6) Shih-sheng Chin ch'eng Wan ? chih hsiang 侍生金城萬口之像 (Image of the Attendant (shih-sheng), Wan ? of Chin ch'eng)<sup>68</sup>

This figure is similar to the preceding two. It is also greatly faded, but part of the lotus stalk he is holding is still evident. He is from Chin ch'eng (present Lan chou), the locale of the former capital of the Western Ch'in before it was moved in 412 to Fu-han (see Map in Fig. 1.1).

7) Shih-sheng T'ien-shui Yang ? chih hsiang 侍生天水楊口之像 (Image of Attendant (shih-sheng), Yang ? , of T'ien-shui)<sup>69</sup>

This figure, like that of Liang Po-hsi (no. 5), is from T'ien-shui. Little remains of the image, but he, too, is holding a lotus stalk (Fig. 7.1).

The male figures in this procession wear the full-sleeved long robe called a p'ao-fu 袍服. It is a thick robe that covers the body and the ends of the sleeves are wide. Also, at least two of the male attendants (nos. 4 and 7) have the remains of the cloth headdress (chin-tse 巾幘) worn by males.<sup>70</sup>

### iii. Row of Eight Donors inside the Niche

This is an important location inside the niche, below the painting of Śākyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Bodhisattva (Figs. 7.1, 7.2 and 7.13a, b). Here there are the remains of the paintings of eight persons, both male and female. All may have had colophons originally, but only the first and seventh colophons are now clear:

1) Feng Hsing (?) ti Sheng Hsing chih hsiang 鳳興(?)弟盛興之像 (Image of Feng Hsing's (?) younger brother Sheng Hsing)<sup>71</sup>

This image shows a standing male figure holding the stem of a lotus in front (Fig. 7.13b). The lotus has wavy lines emanating from the pod. The colophon is at the front of the figure. We do not know who Feng Hsing is, but this is his younger brother and apparently of a prominent family.

2) This figure is apparently a standing young male figure, painted in side view (Fig. 7.13b).

3) Apparently a tall standing male figure. Two large triple-petal lotus buds appear between this figure and the next (Fig. 7.13b).

<sup>67</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> Chang (1992), p. 15.

<sup>71</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 5.

4) A small, young male figure with only the upper body remaining. The image has a cap seemingly similar to the one worn on the male in no.3 in this row. Between this figure and the standing female in no.5 is another triple-petal lotus. There is also a fancy flower form (Fig. 7.13b).

5) This figure is a standing female in long robes, fluttering ribbons and streamers (Figs. 7.13a, b). The hem of the robe is slightly curved and trails far out behind her. The coat-like top has an overlapping scarf collar and long sleeves. This clothing is of the Han style, known in examples from the paintings of Ku K'ai-chih of the Eastern Chin, as scholars have noted.<sup>72</sup> It appears that the Han Chinese fashion such as was known in the South, was adopted by the upper class of Western Ch'in by ca. 420/424. This figure holds up a dish with both hands in front of her chest, making some offering. The colophon appears to be missing.

6) This figure is a standing female with long sleeves on both the inner and outer robe (Figs. 7.13a, b, c). The latter seems to have a narrow border at the V-shaped neckline. Her skirt has similar fluttering ribbons as the female in front of her. She holds a long, leafy lotus stalk, which has a large lotus bud on the top. Her hair is piled up on her head and she faces three-quarters to her right. The colophon is in front of her, but no writing remains. Between this figure and the next is a large flaming jewel. The jewel part is oval shaped with a circle at each end. It stands vertically on a three-petal lotus pedestal and has a large, bold, jagged edge flame pattern around it (Figs. 7.13b, c). The flame patterning is different from that seen in the flaming jewel near the Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 7.9a), but is a little more like the more developed style in the halo of the bronze seated Buddha of the Northern Wei ca. 470's in Fig. 6.13a.

7) Ch'ing-hsin nü ch'i Wang chih hsiang 清信女姜王之像 (Image of the woman believer, wife Wang)<sup>73</sup>

This colophon appears in front of the image of a woman and above the flaming jewel. She holds a large lotus with a prominent seed pod. Her dress is similar to the previous two women in the procession, with the outer sleeves larger than the inner ones, which cover her folded hands. The outer coat is hip length like the others, and the long, flared skirt hangs to the ground with floating ribbons trailing behind her (Figs. 7.13a, b, c).

8) The last image is the remains of the upper part of a female who is positioned slightly lower than the preceding figures (Figs. 7.13a, b, c, d). She appears to be a servant. She holds a large lotus by the stem. Her hands are exposed and she appears to hold a long white cloth in her right hand. Her outer coat has a rolled collar and the left side laps over the right side in the "hu" (ethnic minority) style. The white cuffs of her under robe drape from her wrists. She has narrow, sloping shoulders. Her face is the best preserved among all the donor figures; it shows a large square jaw, pointed nose, red mouth and narrow eyes. Her hairdo has loops over each ear and a large loop projecting out in front of her forehead (Fig. 7.13d).<sup>74</sup> The square jaw face contour is known in the paintings of the Tökhungri tomb of

<sup>72</sup> Chang (1992), p. 15, where he notes that the women wear the k'an chien 坎肩 (sleeveless jacket), a skirt, and streaming ribbons that are similar to the depictions of ladies in Ku K'ai-chih's (d. ca. 406) paintings.

<sup>73</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> According to Chang Pao-hsi, the female images wear a "k'an chien" 坎肩, a kind of sleeveless jacket on top of the clothes and long skirt with streaming ribbons. Their hair is tied high. They have a noble and gorgeous appearance, based on

ca. 408/409.<sup>75</sup> The appearance of servants as donors also occurs in some of the inscriptions of the shih-t'a (stone stupas) of Liang chou.<sup>76</sup>

c. *Other Figures and Inscriptions above the Main Inscription*

There are several other remains at the side and above the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription as well as below the second row of donors outside the niche. These areas are very worn and the painted remains are fragmentary. There is one small image at the left side (facing) of the inscription; six colophons are visible and some remains of two images appear just above the inscription; and a standing Buddha and part of a figure and two colophons survive below the second row of donor figures under the inscription (Fig. 7.1).

i. *Small Standing Monk*

A small standing monk image in añjali mudrā with an offering, is painted in side view between the end of the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription and the outer edge of the mandorla of the Śākyamuni Buddha painting (Figs. 7.1, 7.10a, 7.14a-“a”). The colophon reads Sha-mi Seng-chi chih hsiang 沙彌僧集之像 (Image of the śramaṇa (novice), Seng-chi).<sup>77</sup>

ii. “Yao-wang fo” 藥王佛

This image of a dhyānāsana Buddha appears just above the last line of the Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription (Figs. 7.1, 7.10a Fig. 7.14-“b”). The colophon is above the left shoulder of the seated Buddha, who sits on a circular lotus seat, has a mandorla with head and body halos, and the remains of a canopy above (Fig. 7.10c). He is clearly depicted as a Buddha with uṣṇīṣa and Buddha's robe. This is an intriguing colophon inscription. The identity and origins of Yao-wang fo are not easy to unravel. In order to understand more about the identity of this figure and its early appearance in Chinese Buddhist art, a brief outline of the pertinent texts regarding this image is presented below in chronological sequence according to the time of their translation into Chinese.

a) *Textual Considerations*

This section considers pertinent texts with regard to the identity of “Yao-wang fo”.

1) *Wei-ts'eng-yu ching* 未曾有經 (*Adbhutadharmaparyāya sūtra*), 1 chüan, anonymous translator, Later Han period, in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 16, (T 688), pp. 781-782; Korean Catalogue, K237; *Koryō Taejang-kyong*, Vol. 11, pp. 489-490.

At the very end of this short sutra (fully translated below in section II.G.2), which details how to gain merit by offering stupas, images, etc., there is a list of names in 16 characters as follows: Yao-wang fo 藥王佛 Yao-wang p'u-sa 藥王菩薩 Yao-shang p'u-sa 藥上菩薩 Tseng-shang-t'ien-wang fo 最上天王佛. This listing of names does not seem to have any relation to the body of the text, so their presence is a bit perplexing.<sup>78</sup> These 16 characters do not appear in the Sung, Yüan, and Ming Tripiṭaka versions

the kind known from Ku K'ai-chih's paintings, such as the *Lieh Nü T'u* (The Heroines). Chang (1992), p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> Rhie (2002), Fig. 2.62.

<sup>76</sup> In the stone stupa of Su A-hou 索阿後, ca. 430's probably from Tun-huang, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art. See Yin Kuang-ming, *Pei Liang shih-t'a yen-chiu*, Taipei, 2000, pp. 49-50, 130.

<sup>77</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> These 16 characters are thought by the compilers of the *Daizōkyō* and other earlier Chinese editions to be a later addition to the text.



of this sutra, but they do appear in the version of this sutra in the Koryŏ Tripiṭaka (Tripiṭaka Koreana), found in the Haeinsa woodblocks, which were made in 1251. This Haeinsa version is published in the *Koryŏ Taejangkyong*, Vol. 11, p. 490 (Fig. 7.50).<sup>79</sup> It is also the version of the sutra that currently appears in the *Daizōkyō* (Vol. 16, pp. 781-782). Interestingly, this same sutra is written on the North Wall of Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (see detailed discussion and translation with Group 14 below). However, the end portion of the writing on the cave wall is greatly faded out and not readable, so it is not possible to determine at present if any or all of the 16 characters of the names occurred there.

2) *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*

a) *Wei-mo-chieh ching* 維摩詰經, 2 chüan, translated by Chih-ch'ien (223-228), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 474), pp. 519a-536c.

b) *Wei-mo-chieh so shuo ching* 維摩詰所說經, 3 chüan, translated by Kumārajīva (406 A.D.), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 475), pp. 537a-557b.

In both of these translations, there is the name Yao-wang ju-lai 藥王如來.<sup>80</sup> Here the title Tathāgata (ju-lai 如來) is used rather than Buddha (fo 佛).

3) *Saddharmapuṇḍrika Sūtra* (Lotus Sutra)

a) *Cheng fa-hua ching* 正法華經, 10 chüan, translated by Dharmarakṣa (286 A.D. in Ch'ang-an), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 263), pp. 63a-134b.

b) *Miao fa lien hua ching* 妙法蓮華經 7 chüan (or 8 chüan), translated by Kumārajīva (406 A.D. in Ch'ang-an), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 262), pp. 1c-62c.

Both translations include the following concerning a Yao-wang p'u-sa 藥王菩薩 (but neither has a Yao-wang fo 藥王佛). The name Yao-wang p'u-sa appears a number of times. In Chapter XII of Dharmarakṣa's translation<sup>81</sup> and in Chapter XIII of Kumārajīva's translation.<sup>82</sup> Both use the characters 藥王 to name the Bodhisattva: 藥王菩薩 according to Kumārajīva; "Bodhisattva called 藥王" according to Dharmarakṣa. This chapter opens with the "Bodhisattva Bhaiṣajyarāja, a great being" declaring, along with other Bodhisattvas, to recite, preserve, teach and copy the *Lotus Sutra*.<sup>83</sup> No further mention of this Bodhisattva is made in the remainder of the chapter.

Yao-wang p'u-sa (Bodhisattva King of Healing) is the main subject in Chapter XXI (Dharmarakṣa's translation) and Chapter XXIII (Kumārajīva's translation). Both also use the characters Yao-wang p'u-sa for the translation.<sup>84</sup> In answer to a question from the Bodhisattva Nakṣatrarājasamkusumita about Yao-wang p'u-sa, Buddha Śākyamuni explains the circumstances that underlay that Bodhisattva's attainments, from the time he heard the expounding of the *Lotus Sutra* by the Buddha Candrasuryavimalapratibhāsrī in the remote past, to the time he prepared his body for an offering, burned his body (which was alight for 1,200 years), was reborn in the land of the same Buddha again,

<sup>79</sup> This is known as the second set of Tripiṭaka carvings. The first set was made in the second decade of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but was burned in the 1231 Mongol invasion of Korea. In 1251, a second set was begun during the reign of Koryŏ King Kojong on Khanghwa Island (west of Seoul) where the court was exiled during the period of the Mongol invasions. Chang, Choong-shik, *Hwa-Om Engravings in the Koryo Dynasty* (in Korean), Seoul, 1982, p. 136.

<sup>80</sup> In the Chih-ch'ien translation, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14 (T 474), p. 535c; in Kumārajīva's translation, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 475), p. 556b.

<sup>81</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, p. 106a.

<sup>82</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, p. 35c.

<sup>83</sup> Kubo and Yuyama (1993), p. 199.

<sup>84</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, p. 215a and p. 53a respectively.

paid homage to him, cared for his parinirvāṇa and his relics and 84,000 relic stupas, then burned his arms as offering, made an affirmation of truth that if he will attain the golden body of a Buddha his arms would be restored, and they were. Then Buddha Śākyamuni addressed Bodhisattva Nakṣatrarājasamkusumita saying that “This is none other than the Bodhisattva Bhaiṣajyarāja” (藥王菩薩), who undertook the practice of giving by abandoning his body immeasurable number of times. Buddha goes on to say that one should pay homage to the stupas of the Buddha by burning either a finger or a toe, which is a superior offering to other things. The Buddha Amitāyus and rebirth in Sukhāvatī is mentioned, especially in relation to women, and at the end 84,000 Bodhisattvas “attained the *dhāraṇī* of understanding the speech of all sentient beings. Finally, the Tathāgata Prabhūtaratna (who was still in the jeweled stupa) praised the Bodhisattva Nakṣatrarājasamkusumita for asking about these things that benefitted innumerable numbers of sentient beings.<sup>85</sup> This chapter is considered to be one of the “late chapters” (i.e., not part of the earliest strata of the text), but, nevertheless, it was added before the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century when this text was translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa.

From these two translations of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* it is not clear that Yao-wang p’u-sa has any relation to Yao-wang fo. The future Buddha name of Yao-wang p’u-sa is not given in this sutra. Yao-shang p’u-sa 藥上菩薩 (Bodhisattva Supreme Healer) appears in each of these two translations, but his future Buddha name also is not given.

4) *Kuan ting ch’i wan erh ch’ien shen wang hu pi ch’iu chou ching* 灌頂七萬二千神王護比丘呪經, 12 chüan, said to have been translated by Śrimitra during the reign of Emperor Yüan-ti 元帝 of the Eastern Chin (317-322), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 21, (T 1331); Korean Catalogue (K 174).

This sutra speaks of the Buddha in the eastern direction Yao-shih liu-li kuang ju-lai 藥師琉璃光如來 and his twelve vows. He also has two Bodhisattvas named Sun and Moon. There is also a list of Bodhisattvas: Kuan-shih-yin, Te-ta-shih, Wu-chin-i, Pao-t’an-hua, Yao-wang, Yao-shang, and Mi-le. This sutra appears very similar to the *Yao-shih ju-lai pen yüan ching* [佛說]藥師如來本願經 (Sui Dynasty, but it is apparently an earlier version than the one of 454-465 A.D. (see below, no. 8). It does not use the term Yao-wang fo; it only uses Yao-shih as the Buddha’s name.

5) *Fo-shuo hua-shou ching* 佛說華手經 (*Kuśalamūlasamparigraha Sūtra*), 10 chüan, translated by Kumārajīva, (406 A.D. in Ch’ang-an), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 16, (T 657), pp. 127a-208c; Korean Catalogue, K 396.

This sutra has a reference to Yao-wang fo 藥王佛<sup>86</sup> as well as a phrase: “There is also a Buddha called Yao-wang” 有佛號曰藥王.<sup>87</sup> Yao-wang p’u-sa also occurs.<sup>88</sup>

6) *Ta-fang kuang fo hua-yen ching* 大方廣佛華嚴經 ([*Buddha*] *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, commonly called the *Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經), 60 chüan. (See full discussion above in this chapter, section I.A.1.a.iii.a)). According to the CSTCC it was translated by Buddhahadra (from a text obtained by Chih Fa-ling 支法領 in Khotan) beginning on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 14<sup>th</sup> year of I-hsi 義熙 of the Eastern Chin (April 30, 418 A.D.), and finished (the collation/revision) on the 28<sup>th</sup> day, 12<sup>th</sup> month, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of

<sup>85</sup> Kubo and Yuyama (1993), pp. 293-302.

<sup>86</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 16, (T 657), p. 162a.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159b.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154a.

Yung-ch'u 永初, of [Liu] Sung (February 5, 422 A.D.) at the Tao-ch'ang ssu 道場寺 in Yang chou 楊州.<sup>89</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), pp. 395a-788b. Korean Catalogue (K 79).

This sutra contains the name Yao-wang fo 藥王佛 in a listing of names of various Buddhas.<sup>90</sup> Other than the *Wei-ts'eng yu ching* (T 688) and the *Hua-shou ching* (T 657) translated by Kumārajīva, this is the only text translated prior to ca. 425 which I have been able to determine to have the exact characters written as Yao-wang fo, similar to the colophon on the Group 6 painting on north wall of Cave 169 (Figs. 7.1, 7.10a, 7.14).

7) [*Fo-shuo*] *Kuan Yao-wang Yao-shang erh p'u-sa ching* [佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經 (*Bhaiṣajyarāja bhaiṣajyasamudgata [bodhisattva sūtra]*; Visualization Sutra of the two Bodhisattvas Bhaiṣajyarāja [Yao wang p'u-sa] and Bhaiṣajyasamudgata [Yao-shang p'u-sa]), 1 chüan, translated by Kālayaśas (between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> years of the Yüan-chia (424-442) period of the [Liu] Sung at the Tao-lin ssu 道林寺 in Chien-k'ang), in *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 20, (T 1161); Korean Catalogue, K 379.

This text does not mention Yao-wang fo 藥王佛; it only has Yao-wang p'u-sa 藥王菩薩 and Yao-shang p'u-sa 藥上菩薩. However, it has the prediction of future Buddhahood for these two Bodhisattvas. Yao-wang p'u-sa will become a Buddha named Pure Eye Tathāgata, his realm will be named Radiance of Constant Peace and Joy, and his aeon shall be known as Fully Victorious. Yao-shang p'u-sa will become the Buddha next after Yao-wang p'u-sa and will be called Pure Matrix Tathāgata.<sup>91</sup>

8) *Yao-shih liu-li-kuang ju-lai pen-yüan kung-te ching* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經 (*Bhaiṣajya-guru vaidūrya-prabha-sapūrvapranīdhānaviśeṣavistara Sūtra*; Sutra on the Merits of the Fundamental Vows of the Master of Healing, the Lapis Lazuli Radiance Tathāgata). According to the Preface to the Sutra on the merits of the Fundamental Vows of the Master of Healing Tathāgata (Yao-shih ju-lai pen-yüan kung-te ching hsü 藥師如來本願功德經序 by Hui-chü 慧矩 (617, in the Sui Dynasty), *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 449), p. 401a: "Formerly, during the reign of Sung Hsiao-wu (454-465) at the Deer Wilderness Monastery, the monk Hui-chien 慧簡 translated this text, and it was popular in his age. However, in comparing it to the Sanskrit text, [it was seen that] this Sung monk did not fuse together the confused assortment of works and phrases. This caused numerous doubts to arise in readers."<sup>92</sup>

Thus, the first translation of this sutra was done in 454-465 under [Liu] Sung Emperor Hsiao-wu (454-465) at the Deer Wilderness Monastery 鹿野寺 by the monk Hui-chien 慧簡. It was re-translated by Hui-chü 慧矩 in 617 of the Sui Dynasty as the [*Fo-shuo*] *Yao-shih ju-lai pen-yüan ching* [佛說]藥師如來本願經 in Loyang (*Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 449), pp. 401b-404c), and again later (in 650 A.D. in Ch'ang-an) by Hsüan-tsang 玄奘 as the *Yao-shih liu-li-kuang ju-lai pen-yüan kung-te ching* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經 (*Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, T 450, pp. 404c-408b).<sup>93</sup> This Sui text does not use Yao-wang fo; it only uses Yao-shih. There seems to be some similarity to the *Kuan ting ching* (T 1331) said to have been translated by Śrimitra early in the Eastern Chin (see no. 4 above).

<sup>89</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p.11c, lines 9-10. See more complete discussion of the records concerning the translation of the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* above in this chapter, section I.A.1.a.iii.

<sup>90</sup> In chüan 57, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 9, (T 278), p. 764b.

<sup>91</sup> R. Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha*, Boulder, 1979, pp. 122-123.

<sup>92</sup> Birnbaum (1979), pp. 149 and 236.

<sup>93</sup> Birnbaum (1979), pp. 149-150.

## b) Concluding Remarks Regarding “Yao-wang fo”

The literature regarding Yao-wang fo is involved and complicated. From the materials briefly examined here, the following points can be observed:

1) The exact name Yao-wang fo 藥王佛 appears in the *Wei-ts'eng-yu ching* 未曾有經 (Later Han), where it is among the 16 characters at the end of this short sutra. The four names in that list (also including Yao-wang p'u-sa and Yao-shang p'u-sa), appear to be unrelated to the text and are generally considered to be a later addition. One notable factor regarding this sutra in our present context is that the *Wei-ts'eng-yu ching* 未曾有經 is copied onto the wall of Cave 169 (see Group 14 below), though it is worn out at the end, so it is not possible to see if it originally had the same list of 16 characters that are preserved in the Haeinsa Tripiṭaka, the oldest record of the Chinese Tripiṭaka presently existing, and in the current *Daizōkyō*.

2) The name Yao-wang fo 藥王佛 and the phrase “Buddha called Yao-wang” appeared in the translation of the *Fo-shuo hua-shou ching* 佛說華手經 by Kumārajīva, possibly indicating that Kumārajīva was the first, or among the first, to specifically use “Yao-wang fo” in translation (if the list of names at the end of the *Wei ts'eng-yu ching* cannot be taken as an earlier reference). Yao-wang fo was clearly used by Buddhahadra in his translation of the *Hua-yen ching* (completed early in 420 and the collation/revision completed in 422). Thus there appears to have been a series of developments in the translations from Chih-ch'ien (mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century) “Yao-wang ju-lai” to Kumārajīva’s “Yao-wang fo” and “Buddha called Yao-wang” to Buddhahadra’s “Yao-wang fo,” the latter being the same as the colophon in Cave 169 Group 6 painting of Yao-wang fo.

3) It does not seem that Yao-wang p'u-sa or Yao-shang p'u-sa is related to Yao-wang fo or to Yao-wang shih as they are seen in the “Kuan” (*Kuan Yao-wang Yao-shang erh p'u-sa ching* [佛說]觀藥王藥上二菩薩經) translated by Kālayaśas, where both are given the prediction of future Buddhahood and where their Buddha names are different (but neither are Yao-wang fo). They appear to be separate and unrelated.

Perhaps there are texts not currently surviving or that I have not seen that do speak of Yao-wang fo, but at the present there are at least two credible references (Kumārajīva’s *Fo-shuo hua-shou ching* and Buddhahadra’s *Hua-yen ching*), which provide a relatively certain degree of confirmation for the existence of a “Yao-wang fo” in Chinese texts by the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly the colophon of the Group 6 Yao-wang fo painting (figure “b” in drawing in Fig. 7.14a-“b”) provides evidence to believe there was a Yao-wang fo among the early known Buddhas in China and was in currency in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. This Cave 169 Group 6 painting (Fig. 7.10a, upper left corner) may well be the earliest known example of Yao-wang fo.

## iii. ?? chih p'u-sa □□至菩薩

Only the last three characters remain in this colophon, which is next to a flame patterned outer rim of a mandorla (Fig. 7.1 and 7.14a-“c”). It could be [Te]-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa (Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva).

## iv. Chieh-yin fo 接引佛

This colophon is located above the inscription (Fig. 7.1 and Fig. 7.14a-“d”).<sup>94</sup> According to Chang Pao-hsi, the “Chieh-yin fo” colophon inscription probably refers to a standing image of Amitābha Buddha

<sup>94</sup> Chang (1992), p. 16.

“receiving and leading” sentient beings to the Western Pure Land. He suggests that this could be the earliest image of this type, but he states that there are no surviving remains of the painting.<sup>95</sup>

The term “chieh-yin” 接引 refers to Amitāyus as described in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* 觀無量壽佛經,<sup>96</sup> but it is not used in the other sutras on Amitābha/Amitāyus. Neither T 361 (*Wu-liang ch’ing-ching p’ing-teng chüeh ching*), nor T 362 (*A-mi-t’o san-yeh san fo sa lou fo t’an kuo tu jen tao ching*), nor T360 (*Wu-liang shou ching*) use the term “chieh-yin.” Nor does it occur in the *Hua-yen sutra* (translated by Buddhahadra; completed early in 420 and the revision completed early in 422). However, a similar search of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (T 368) yields two exact examples, in the opening verse,<sup>97</sup> and once again in the body of the text.<sup>98</sup>

The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* sutra is one of the primary canonical texts of the Pure Land tradition, but its translation into Chinese, which is the only version of the text now in existence, has been somewhat unclear and unsubstantiated. It is said to have been translated between 424 and 442 in South China during the Yüan-chia 元嘉 period of [Liu] Sung by Kālayaśas. The biography of Kālayaśas from the *Kao-seng chuan*, the earliest surviving record concerning Kālayaśas, is translated above in Chapter 6 (section II.A.2.c.17a, pp. 226-227) along with a discussion of some of the issues involved with him as translator of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*. There are other records, but they basically follow the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Kālayaśas.<sup>99</sup> According to the *Kao-seng chuan* biography Kālayaśas translated both the *Kuan Wu-liang shou [fo] ching* and the *Yao-wang Yao-shang ching* in Chien-yeh at the Tao-lin monastery on Chung-shan sometime after 424 and before 442.

If the phrase “chieh-yin fo” used in the Group 6 colophon in Fig. 7.14a- “d” is any indication of the currency of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou [fo] ching* and its teaching, as suggested by the appearance of the phrase in that text, but not in the other surviving Amitābha/Amitāyus texts translated prior to ca. 425 (i.e., T 361, 362, 360), then the presence of “Chieh-yin fo” in the colophon “d” of Group 6 in Cave 169 is an important circumstantial evidence in support of the existence of the teaching of contents of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* around the time of the painting, which is probably very close to or even associated with the date of 424 (or 420) of the main inscription of Group 6 (see discussion of this date above in Chapter 7, section I.A.2.a.ii). This indicates a special importance for this colophon, because it would tend to: 1) substantiate the presence of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* teaching in China by ca. 424 or thereabouts, and 2) it could point to a translation by Kālayaśas early in his stay at Chien-yeh, that is, very close to the 424 date. It is hard to determine the exact timeline from the biographical record in the *Kao-seng chuan*, but it would appear to have been after Emperor Wen-ti made an edict establishing the residence of Kālayaśas at the Tao-lin ssu. Emperor Wen-ti came to the throne in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of Yüan-chia 1<sup>st</sup> year (424), so it presumably would be after that time. It could be possible that events evolved rapidly during that year and that the translation could have come out shortly after. If the Group 6 paintings are close to the date of the niche, and if the date of the niche is taken to be the *tz’u* year (424), the inscription would still be the 3<sup>rd</sup> month 24<sup>th</sup> day, which is apparently before the ascension of Wen-ti to the throne. However, there are many possibilities regarding

<sup>95</sup> Chang (1992), p. 16.

<sup>96</sup> According to the Chinese Buddhist Dictionary, “Chieh-yin fo” is a phrase from the *Kuan Wu-liang shou fo ching* (“with his treasure hand receiving and leading sentient beings”). *Fo-hsüeh ta-tz’u-tien*, ed. by Ting Fu-pao, Peking, 1991, p. 984.

<sup>97</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 12, (T 368), p. 340c, line 10.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344a.

<sup>99</sup> See *Chen-yüan hsin ting shih chiao mu lu* 負元新定釋教目錄 (early T’ang; chüan 7, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2157), p. 820c; and the *K’ai-yüan shih-chiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (8<sup>th</sup> century T’ang; *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2154).



the reason for the “Chieh-yin fo” inscription, whether it be dated to ca. 424 or to ca. 420, though the former would seem to be the more reasonable. Since the biography does not provide all the details of the time line of the travels of Kālayāśas, it is even possible that he was in the Western Ch’in kingdom prior to his arrival at Chien-yeh. In that case, he may have taught the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* in the area of Western Ch’in, which he later set down in writing in Chien-yeh at the request of the monk Sung-hao. Or, it is possible to speculate that the *Kuan ching* was known through other means (other texts or other teachers) and came to be known to the donors of the Group 6 paintings. It is clear that Kālayāśas went West up the Yangtzu River to Chiang-ling, then to Szechwan and then came back to Chiang-ling, and that he taught and “formed groups” of followers, so his teaching of the *Kuan ching* may have spread in this way. We may never know the details, but it is probably reasonable to say that this colophon and its phrase “Chieh-yin fo” has some relation to the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* and in that case provides further evidence to the presence of that teaching in China by ca. 424 (or around the mid-420’s). This in turn would help to support the attribution of Kālayāśas as the translator of this text.

This inscription is important in that it may be the earliest known example (in China) of Amitābha leading sentient beings to Sukhāvati, and it may refer to the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*. It could be that Ta-shih chih is the Bodhisattva accompanying the image for which only the characters ? ? chih p’u-sa 至菩薩 still survive (Fig. 7.1 and 7.14a- “c”). However, there is no colophon apparent for Kuan-shih-yin and no remains of any images to suggest how the triad may have been positioned. Nevertheless, this painting with inscriptions “c” (possibly indicating Mahāsthāmaprāpta) and “d” (with the characters Chien-yin fo) and including the remains of part of a large mandorla may be a single group. It is located in an important location: right above the center of the main inscription (Fig. 7.1), and it seems to be accompanied by a husband and wife donor pair (Fig. 7.14a- “e” and “f”), perhaps being led by Amitābha/Amitāyus (see inscriptions v. and vi following).

v. Ch’ing-hsin shih Chin ch’eng Wan Wen chih hsiang 清信士金城萬溫之像 (Image of the believer, Wan Wen of Chin ch’eng)<sup>100</sup>

Only the inscription remains (Fig. 7.14a- “e”). It is located near inscription “d” and forms a vertical pair with inscription “f”. It is another donor from the Chin ch’eng (Lan chou) area, who was a lay believer.

vi. Ch’ing-hsin nü Wen ch’i ? ? ? ? ? 清信女溫妻 ? ? ? ? ? (Woman believer, wife of Wen ? ? ? ? ?).<sup>101</sup>

This appears to be the wife of Wan Wen 萬溫 in inscription “e” above (Fig. 7.14a- “f”). It is located near and parallel to colophon “e”. It seems possible that Wan Wen and his wife were being led to the Buddha land by Amitāyus and Te-ta-shih-chih p’u-sa (and perhaps Kuan shih yin, whose inscription as well as image may now be lost). If such were the case, then this would be a configuration that reflects the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (the *Kuan ching*), since other texts prior to that time translated into Chinese do not mention Amitāyus/Amitābha coming down specifically together with the two Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

#### d. Images and inscriptions below the second row of donors

The area below the main inscription of Group 6 is largely damaged, worn out and repaired, but one group survives with two figures and two colophons (Fig. 7.15 and 7.14b)

<sup>100</sup> Chang (1992), p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> Chang (1992), p. 15.



### i. Standing Buddha

There is a standing Buddha (below the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> donor in the 2<sup>nd</sup> row) with right hand in the abhaya mudrā and left hand holding a hem of his robe (Fig. 7.14b-“g”). He stands on a lotus pedestal, has a mandorla with oval-shaped body halo and circular head halo, and there is a canopy above him. The figure is similar to the standing Buddha inscribed as Shih-chia-mou-ni fo (Śākyamuni) inside the Group 6 niche (Figs. 7.1, 7.2). As suggested by Chang Pao-hsi, this smaller painting is probably also Śākyamuni.<sup>102</sup> There is a colophon above his left shoulder, but no characters are there.

### ii. male donor “Ch’i-fu ? Lo-shih chih hsiang”

To the standing Buddha’s right there is the remains of a standing male (donor) figure with a colophon reading Ch’i-fu ? Lo-shih chih hsiang 乞佛口羅使之像 (Image of Ch’i-fu ? Lo-shih)<sup>103</sup> (Fig. 7.14b-“h”). He is probably a member of the Ch’i-fu ruling family of the Western Ch’in. However, the character for “fu” is not the same as used in the Ch’i-fu 乞伏 family name, so there is some ambiguity (or a mistake by the calligrapher of the colophon). This figure also wears a similar large robe as the male donors noted above. It seems clear that the dress is not that of the ethnic Hsien-pi but of the Han Chinese type. Apparently the members of the Ch’i-fu family have adopted the Han style of dress by this time. These clear examples in the donors of the Group 6 niche and its paintings are important in indicating admiration of the Han culture and some probable connections of the Western Ch’in with the Eastern Chin in the South. Such influences may also extend to the style of artistic representation as well, and perhaps even to the selection of Buddhist images. The element of dress is one definite clue among others that the art of the Group 6 niche and its paintings may reflect elements from South China.

## 3. Group 6: Summations and Conclusions

The Group 6 sculptures and wall paintings present a complex and immensely important group of images on multiple levels for understanding a variety of aspects of Chinese Buddhist art in the 420’s. Though this is especially pertinent for the locality of the Western Ch’in, the Group 6 niche has more far-reaching significance for understanding how Buddhist texts relate to the imagery of this time in other areas of China, and the cross-fertilization of ideas and their adaptation to art in their functional form from other areas of China. This group also sheds light on specific elements of Buddhist art and activities at this time. It not only yields insights regarding a host of difficult problems of early Buddhist art in China, but it even offers consequential data reflecting on the understanding of the developments of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhist art as it is taking shape in northwest India and in parts of Central Asia. The main factors of the various issues raised by the Group 6 niche are summarized here based on the analysis presented in the above sections.

### a. Inscriptions

#### i. Main Inscription

One major reason for the crucial importance of this niche is the fact that its main donative inscription has a surviving and credible date. However, the manner of writing the date opens up the interpretation to be read as either 420 (the *nien-hao* date of Chien-hung first year 建弘元年) or as 424 (the *tz’u* 次 date of Hsüan-hsiao 玄柁 based on the ancient system of astrology using the stations of Jupiter).

<sup>102</sup> Chang (1992), p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> Chang (1992), p. 16.

Because the latter is time-honored and tends to be more stable and consistent (*nien-hao* dates change irregularly according to the will of the ruler), precedence of the 424 date over the 420 date is given serious consideration. There will be more to say about this issue below after considering the conclusions of the textual sources of this niche.

No mention of Amitāyus appears in the surviving portions of this main inscription, but the inscription is more than half damaged and missing more than half the characters. A portion of the inscription near the end praises Maitreya Bodhisattva (referred to as Tzu tsun 茲 [for 慈] 尊 or as Tzu shih 慈氏, a name for Maitreya also used in the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra*).

## ii. Monk and Lay Donor Inscriptions

Colophon inscriptions accompany the remains of some figures above the main inscription and below the two rows of donors outside the niche as well as a major row of donors of one family inside the niche. The donors are a significant group of high monks, young monks, high officials of Western Ch'in and members of their families and attendants, altogether around 21 persons that are presently countable (there are some faded and worn out areas). Many have surviving colophons naming them along with their title.

### a) Monk Donors

The ranking monk and leader in the uppermost row of donors (immediately under the main inscription) is the Protector of the Nation, Great Meditation Master, T'an-ma-pi 護國大禪師曇摩毘 (also known as T'an-wu-pi 曇無毘). He is known from the biography of Hsüan-kao 玄高 in the *Kao-seng chuan* (see translation in Chapter 1.II.C) as "a foreign country's meditation master," who came to Western Ch'in, led his followers, established groups and instructed them in the meditation method (ch'an-fa 禪法). T'an-ma-pi came to Mai-chi shan at the time Hsüan-kao was there (probably sometime between ca. 416-early 420's). The biography states that Hsüan-kao, who himself had deep samādhi capability, wanted to establish a group and to receive the teaching of T'an-wu [ma]-pi. However, within 10 days, T'an-wu [ma]-pi changed his mind and left the area (the implication being that there was some rivalry between T'an-wu [ma]-pi and Hsüan-kao). Later in this same biography when speaking of the incident of slander against Hsüan-kao by two monks to the prince of Western Ch'in, it states that "T'an-wu[ma]-pi had already returned to the west to lead a peaceful life." Before that, T'an-ma [wu]-pi must have received his title as National Protector that appears in the colophon in Group 6 in Cave 169.

This inscription affords corroborative evidence of events with the *Kao-seng chuan* record and amplifies our knowledge of the apparent prestige and popularity of T'an-ma-pi in the Western Ch'in (more than likely in the capital at Fu-han near Ping-ling ssu). Probably the important group of donors of the Group 6 niche, most holding influential posts in the Western Ch'in government, may have been among his followers. It is clear that T'an-ma [wu]-pi was famous and remained in Western Ch'in for a time following his 10-day stay at Mai-chi shan. It is also likely, since he was a famous meditation master, that he would gravitate to areas where meditation was especially practiced at a high level. He apparently tried Mai-chi shan, but did not stay there (possibly because of rivalry with Hsüan-kao, who was there and was renowned for his skill in meditation). He may well have gone West to the Western Ch'in capital and Ping-ling ssu where Cave 169 was also a famous meditation site (even one of Hsüan-kao's noted disciples, Hsüan-shao 玄紹, eventually went there and later died there). T'an-ma [wu]-pi's portrait as the lead donor of Group 6 clearly speaks of his relation with this cave and some of the monks who may have been meditating monks and/or disciples. At the same time he undoubtedly

met (or had met in his travels) some prominent members of the Western Ch'in government and court society who were inspired to initiate or to join in the dedication of a niche to Amitāyus and its accompanying paintings.

Immediately behind T'an-ma [wu]-pi is the monk (bhikṣu) Tao-jung 道融, discussed earlier (in Chapter 5, Group 24) as a critical lynch pin in understanding the chronology of Cave 169. He appears in the earlier inscription of Group 24, discussed as the thousand Buddha painting related to the *Lotus Sutra*, particularly because it has an embedded panel of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the seven jewel stupa from Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*). His biography from the *Kao-seng chuan* provides details about his life, his study of the *Lotus Sutra*, his momentous activities in Ch'ang-an during the time of Kumārajīva's translation work, and his final days as a famous teacher in P'eng-ch'eng in the South, his original homeland. He became particularly famous for winning the debate with the heterodox Sri Lankan who had journeyed to Ch'ang-an for the purpose of defeating Buddhism, but left in disgrace after being defeated by Tao-jung, who had been chosen by Kumārajīva for the debate. Considering the portrait image of Tao-jung with accompanying colophon in the top row of donors of Group 6, it seems Tao-jung likely returned to Western Ch'in and Ping-ling ssu (probably before the disasters in Ch'ang-an from 416 that lasted well into the 420's) and became a main person taking part in the making of this niche. Later, he would return South to P'eng-ch'eng where he became a renowned teacher and also wrote commentaries on a number of texts, including the *Lotus Sutra*. His presence in two inscriptions in Cave 169 (one in Group 24 and the other in Group 6) match respectively the early phase and the later phase of the art in this cave during the Western Ch'in period, for both of which he was a major donor, though certainly more prominent in the Group 6 donation of 424 (or 420).

These two inscriptions, one of Group 24 and one of Group 6, form added evidence that amplifies his biography and at the same time throws considerable light on the activities at Ping-ling ssu and Cave 169. Tao-jung's biography together with the inscriptions in Cave 169 help us not only to reconstruct the lives and activities of a particular monk in China during the period from ca. 400-ca. mid 420's, but also adds specific evidence for the apparent phenomenon that monks at this time for their studying and teaching frequently traveled around to various areas in China, despite the fragmented political situation of the Sixteen Kingdoms period. In fact, it seems to be a fact of life at this time, especially given some of the historical conditions which often prompted warfare and rapid change of conditions, such as the kind that beset Ch'ang-an. Given this apparent mobility among at least some of the most motivated of the Buddhist saṅgha, it is no wonder that the dissemination of newly translated texts also travelled rapidly to various regions at the time, especially between Chien-k'ang, Ch'ang-an, Szechwan and the centers of Kansu. We will certainly continue to see more evidences of this in the remainder of this study and the volumes to come. Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu does, however, stand out as a prime resource for understanding this period of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century on many levels in addition to the art.

The small figure of a "sramanera," a young Buddhist novice, is included in the space between the end of the main inscription and the mandorla of the wall painting of the Śākyamuni Buddha inside the niche. Possibly he is a novice monk belonging to one of the families of the donors or is a disciple of one of the Buddhist masters. He is given a small but nevertheless prominent space for his depiction.

#### b) Lay Donors

Behind the two monks T'an-ma [wu]-pi and Tao-jung in the first row of donors below the main inscription there were depictions of five lay donors (apparently all male), probably of high status, but no colophons remain.

The second row (below the first) is also led by two monks (bhikṣu ?? and bhikṣu Hui-p'u) who are followed by five prominent lay donors, some of whom retain their colophons: these include (cited here by their rank—for their names, see above): Gentleman (po-shih) from Nan-an, attendant (shih-sheng) from Kuang-ning, attendant (shih-sheng from T'ien-shui, attendant (Shih-sheng) from Chin ch'eng (Lan chou), and attendant (shih-sheng) from T'ien-shui. These figures, all male, are garbed in the Han style Chinese long robes with wide sleeves (and two have the Chinese style cloth headdress worn by males). These colophons reveal upper class male donors from Nan-an, Kuang-ning, Chin ch'eng and two from T'ien-shui, all major governing centers under the Western Ch'in and prominent cities of the time (period of the ruler Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, 412-427). This means they gathered for the project at Ping-ling ssu from "out of town." Ping-ling ssu is, however, not far from the capital of Western Ch'in, Fu-han 枹罕, and was on the major travel and trade route known as the Ho-hsi southern route from Fu-han in Western Ch'in through Ch'ing-hai to either the center of Kansu (Chang-yeh) or directly to the Southern Silk Road through the territory of the T'u-yu-hun (see Appendix I).

Another and very prominent group of eight lay persons is depicted inside the Amitāyus niche itself. These seem to be members of one family. They are possibly the principle donors of the niche, and therefore occupy the most prominent position inside the niche and close to the sculpted images. There are four males and four females; the four males are at the head followed by the four females. All except the last female figure, who is likely a servant, are all gorgeously dressed in the Han Chinese style robes and headdresses. The colophon for one man and one woman still remain (the others are lost): the man is called "Sheng Hsing, the younger brother of Feng Hsing." The woman is called "Woman believer, wife Wang." There is no title of rank with either one, but the woman is called a [Buddhist] believer (ch'ing-hsin 清信).

Four other colophons remain: two lay donors in the area that is greatly worn out above the main inscription, and one below the two rows of donors beneath the main inscription. The two above are the gentleman "Wan Wen of Chin ch'eng" and "Wen's wife," both called "ch'ing-hsin" ([Buddhist] believers). This husband and wife pair are associated with the remains of what must have been a painted Buddha with one remaining (possibly originally two) attendant Bodhisattva(s). This configuration may have been Amitābha/Amitāyus (called in the colophon as "Chieh-yin fo" 接引佛) and the one remaining Bodhisattva is most likely to have been Ta-te-shih-chih p'u-sa (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) with only the last three characters still remaining in the colophon. If so, then this couple may be the donors of the earliest known representation of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*, the meditation sutra on Amitāyus translated by Kālayaśas in Chien-k'ang between 424-442. It is apparently the earliest sutra in Chinese to first use the phrase "chieh-yin" 接引 to refer to Amitābha/Amitāyus. This colophon data, fragmentary as it is, nevertheless impacts the consideration of the date of translation of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*, as will be discussed below.

The remaining donor colophon is lower down under the two rows of donors below the main niche. It cites a donor called Ch'i-fu ? Lo-shih 乞佛口羅使, probably a member of the Ch'i-fu 乞佛 (possibly a mistake for Ch'i-fu 乞伏) ruling family of the Western Ch'in. He is associated with a standing Buddha painting. This donor colophon is particularly significant as the only remaining inscription that includes the name of the Ch'i-fu ruling family and indicates involvement of the ruling family with dedications at Ping-ling ssu, at least around the time of the Group 6 images.

Altogether, Group 6 presents a very impressive group of donors, both in terms of number of donors and the high rank of the donors. Donor inscriptions and donor images have been known in the Buddhist art of India and the Gandhāran region from the days of early Buddhist art, and that is true of

early Chinese Buddhist art as well. For example, the famous flame-shouldered bronze Buddha of the Sackler Museum at Harvard University of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century<sup>104</sup> had two donors on the pedestal, and the 338 Later Chao bronze Buddha in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco has a relatively lengthy dedicatory inscription. There are others from the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries (the Sian steles and the Wei Wen-lang stele, etc.), and there are impressive donors in South China, now known only from the records, as well as some important remains from the central and western areas of Kansu in the 420's, such as those appearing on the miniature stone stupas known as "shih-t'a" (these will be studied in Vol. IV). But none of these have such extensive inscriptions as the main inscription of Group 6, and none have the number of donors, or donors and monks of such high rank. In that matter, the donors, colophons and the main inscription of the Group 6 ensemble stand out as truly impressive and special remains, important on many accounts, but certainly for the high status of the donors. This also reinforces the visual and technical impression that the niche was an expensive production, with the finest available artists, possibly invited in from other locales, employed for its execution. The fact that the main inscription of this niche especially lauds the painter of the Maitreya wall painting with such phrases as "...requested the profound master [artist] to make Maitreya Bodhisattva image's supernatural appearance to be outstanding and splendid..." and "...making the Maitreya image to be a wonderful and splendid image..." reveals that the painter had considerable respect and may have been renowned.<sup>105</sup> The connections with the Han Chinese dress is a strong suggestion that there was some profound cultural influence from the South in the Western Ch'in area by ca. 420's, during the reign of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (r. 412-427), the period of greatest prosperity and peace in Western Ch'in.

#### b. *Artistic Elements*

Both the sculptures and the wall paintings are remarkable for their sophisticated and elegant artistic style of which some of the features are noted here.

##### i. Sculpture

The sculptural analysis revealed that the clay images of the Group 6 niche show both a development from the earlier sculptures (Groups 18, 17, 16, 23, 22, 20, and 21) and new styles in the form, drapery and accessory motifs. The body shape of the seated Buddha with its elongated torso, sharp waist distinction and sloping abdomen is more clearly defined than these earlier seated Buddha images in Cave 169. One of the most comparable examples with respect to the torso formation is the small wooden seated Buddha from Khora (near Karashahr) on the Northern Silk Route (Fig. 6.9a). Whether or not the Khora Buddha may be reflecting Chinese styles or those of Central Asia, a factor difficult to distinguish, it nevertheless helps to substantiate the style of the Amitāyus Buddha of Group 6 as one that is more pervasive and wide-spread than merely a local style at Ping-ling ssu.

<sup>104</sup> Rhie (1999), figs. 1.71, 1.76, 1.77.

<sup>105</sup> Though this is still circumstantial evidence, it is of some consequence for understanding the attitude towards master painters in this early period, which may well have been the norm under the Eastern Chin and [Liu] Sung in the South. Such concrete evidence as presented by Sarah Fraser in her recent book *Performing the Visual* (2004), including sketches of artists as well as documentation that reveal the work methods of the painters and their status in Late T'ang and the Five Dynasties with regard to Tun-huang, is not yet forthcoming regarding this early period of Buddhist art in China, there are nevertheless some glimpses that offer some insight. Of course, the circumstances change depending upon the nature of the work, its function and importance. With regard to Group 6, it is clear that it is an outstanding example of the time on many levels, including its artistic merit.



The drapery of the Buddha is a different form than seen in the earlier images in Cave 169, but still uses a basically incised line technique. The outer robe is worn in the sling mode used for seated images in *dhyānā mudrā*, a feature notable in the stucco imagery of Gandhāra and Afghanistan, as will be discussed further in Chapter 8. The outer robe drops low into the lap, revealing the inner robe that is here beautifully patterned with hexagonal painted designs. Asymmetrical disposition of the drapery over the legs is different from the more usual symmetrical arrangements as shown in the earlier seated Buddhas, such as those of Groups 20, 21 and 23.

The head of the Buddha is magnificent and miraculously still quite perfectly preserved after more than 1,500 years. It is worthy of high praise as a truly splendid example of early Chinese sculpture, as is the whole image. Compared with the surviving heads of the Group 18, 23, 22, 21 and 20 Buddhas, the Group 6 Amitāyus shows a different hand and a touch which is both powerful and refined. The painted markings, apparently original, are fluid and skillfully applied. It possesses a rare surviving *ūrṇā* surrounded by dots, probably indicative of light.

The Bodhisattvas are somewhat petite in shape and lack the more robust form seen in the earlier Group 17 standing Bodhisattva or the wiry qualities of the Group 22 standing Bodhisattva. Robes, jewelry and crown forms are similar but have specific differences, as noted in the analysis above. Overall there is a tendency towards reduction of linear components in the design. Incised lines continue to be the technique of choice for the linear and fold representations. Though probably based to a degree on Gandhāran prototypes, the representations are much closer to those found in sculptures from sites such as Tumshuk and Karashahr on the Northern Silk Road, both of which are active at this time. Even so, there is a definite Chinese modification stressing simplicity of form and line, a certain grace, and the impression of a charming purity and childlike innocence.

## ii. Paintings

The paintings of Group 6 are distinguished by the lavish usage of malachite green, proportionately more than seen in earlier paintings in Cave 169. In that matter the only earlier rivals are some of the paintings in the caves at Kizil, such as Cave 38 of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and Cave 14, of ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Cave 14 was specifically noted to have a similar style halo design as seen on the flaming jewel painting at the left side of the Maitreya Bodhisattva painting inside the niche of Group 6. The style of this Maitreya also appears to relate to the figures of Cave 4 at Kizil. The profuse usage of malachite in Group 6 certainly suggests the expense of the production of Group 6, and shows some probable influence of the Northern Route painting tradition with regard to the choice of color. Kucha was known as the area of luxury Buddhist goods, often imported into China and given as gifts by rulers to famous Buddhist masters, such as in the cases of the Former Ch'in ruler Fu Chien to Tao-an, and the Later Ch'in ruler Yao-hsing to Hui-yüan.<sup>106</sup>

In the Group 6 paintings color does not appear to have been used for modeling or the shading of folds in garments. There is sparing usage of red. Black is used mainly for the contours and accents such as hair, shoes and for the colophon writing. The under paint is white, but white is also used for some contrast for flame patterns and pearl motifs. The linear style is even, competent and rather soft, but it is definitely a Chinese style of line and not typical of the Central Asian style. It is not as brusque and swift as used in the paintings of Groups 11, 12, 13, and 14 on the North Wall, and it is more fluid than the remains of paintings from the earlier examples in Cave 169, such as in Group 24. There would also seem to be some relation with the paintings in the earliest niches at Mai-chi shan, which will be

<sup>106</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 85-86 and 138-139.



discussed below in Chapter 9. The paintings do not seem to have been executed by a foreign artist, but one who was trained in the classic Chinese painting tradition, and it is likely to have been someone familiar with the art of the Ku K'ai-chih tradition from the South, especially considering the manner in which the dress of the women donors is handled. Considering the other links to South China, it can tentatively be suggested that the artists seem to have been somehow related to painting of the South, perhaps brought in from Chien-k'ang, or Szechwan, or possibly from the T'ien-shui area. Be that as it may, stylistically, these paintings are a strongly Chinese style rendering, despite some similarities with the paintings of Kizil.

Overall, the niche reflects a high plateau in Buddhist art in China. It presents inspired, high quality artistic work that raises the developments as witnessed in the earlier Cave 169 images to yet another major level. Because of the date of Group 6 to ca. 424 (or 420), these images are a splendid benchmark for sculptural style at a critical juncture in the development of Chinese Buddhist art when donations on the popular level were on the increase. The 420's marks major advances reflecting a second wave of important translations appearing on the scene in China following those by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an in the first decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This second wave saw the momentous translations in Chien-k'ang by Buddhahadra, Pao-yün, Kālayāśas and others, as well as by Dharmakṣema in Liang-chou.

### c. *Iconography and Textual Sources*

The iconographic aspects of the Group 6 niche, with respect to identification of individual images, their textual basis, and for understanding the iconographic program of the niche as a whole, and ultimately its place in Cave 169, are surprising, immensely instructive, and relevant not only to Buddhist art, but as providing insights into the integration of art with the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese. This niche provides spectacular evidence for the iconographic study of early Chinese Buddhist art around the 420's that has ramifications beyond the study of the Chinese art itself.

#### i. *Amitāyus Triad*

This Amitāyus is probably the earliest known identified Amitāyus in China to survive to the present. A colophon above his left shoulder states his name: Wu-liang-shou fo. Other images of Amitāyus are known from South China from written records, such as the famous image made by Tai K'uei. There is one very important inscribed fragment of a standing Amitābha Buddha from Mathurā dated to ca. mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century (153 A.D. in the reign of Huviṣka), thus indicating the existence of Amitābha in the art of India proper by that time. A stone relief sculpture in the Peshawar Museum from Gandhāra presented in Chapter 6 has what is suggested here to be a complex scene of Amitābha/Amitāyus in Sukhāvati probably dating stylistically to ca. 400 A.D. Given the extreme rarity of identifying an Amitābha/Amitāyus image in this early period, the example of the Group 6 inscribed and dated example is extremely fortuitous and significant, not only because Amitābha/Amitāyus becomes such a major factor in the Buddhist history of East Asia, but also because the appearance of an Amitābha image is a clear marker of the Mahāyāna, which is difficult to identify in terms of imagery in its early years in the art of India, Gandhāra or Central Asia.

The Group 6 Amitāyus is seated in dhyānāsana together with two standing attendant Bodhisattvas who are also each named in a colophon: Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa at the Buddha's right, and Te-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa, at the Buddha's left. As a triad of Amitāyus with his two great Bodhisattvas, the Group 6 images are the earliest clear, surviving examples of such a triad in China.

In the study presented in Chapter 6 regarding the possible textual basis for this triad in a Chinese translation prior to ca. 425, it was found that the specific name-character designations for all three

images are those used in the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* translated into Chinese as the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360). Other translations had included mention of the two great Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvātī, but other translations used different characters for their names. There is, however, controversy surrounding the translator of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and scholars have differing opinions. These were investigated, but it is clear that there is no definite resolution of the problem, particularly among the Japanese scholars, who have been the most active in investigating this issue. The two most plausible and relatively recent theories come down to 1) Dharmarakṣa in ca. late 3rd century, and 2) Buddhabhadra (together with Pao-yün) in 421—the translation that is cited in the CTSCC as the “*New Wu-liang-shou ching*”. The Dharmarakṣa theory, primarily presented by Nogami, was largely based on the existence of a copied manuscript of the first chüan of the 2-chüan *Wu-liang-shou ching* currently in the Ôtani collection. This copied text is said to be from Tun-huang and dated to 415, a date which would, in Nogami’s view, preclude a translation by Buddhabhadra and Pao-yün in 421. Fujita Kôtatsu investigated this problem in his 1970 work on the Pure Land tradition. He shed considerable doubt on the date of this manuscript, but admitted that the issue of the translator could not be completely resolved, though he favored the Buddhabhadra/Pao-yün theory. At this stage of the issue, we can nevertheless assert that the Group 6 niche most successfully matches with the text of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, a factor which can have some impact on the general discussion of the translator and date of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (more on this below).

The issue of the appearance of a triad comprised of Amitābha/Amitāyus with two Bodhisattvas is one of great interest in Indian (including Gandhāra), and Chinese Buddhist studies. In the case of India (and Gandhāra) it has not yet been possible to certainly identify any triad among the rather numerous examples of simple triads (not considering the complex relief scenes, the so-called “composite scenes” or “Śrāvastī Miracle” scenes), or triads that also include Indra and Brahmā as two additional attendant images. However, it seems likely to be possible to see the two Bodhisattvas as part of the large scene of Sukhāvātī, such as suggested with regard to the Peshawar Museum relief in Figs. 6. 20a-j, as that of Amitābha/Amitāyus with Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta along with other figures in Sukhāvātī. This Peshawar Museum relief probably dates around 400 A.D. and appears to be an earlier (and possibly clearer) example of Sukhāvātī than the difficult large Mohammad Nāri relief stele suggested earlier by John Huntington as a possible Sukhāvātī representation and still remains to be resolved.

Triads occur earlier in China, such as in the bronze altar images from Hopei from ca. second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but these have yet to be clearly identified with regard to iconography. The Group 6 triad is also different from the painted triads of Group 24 (embedded in the thousand Buddhas) and also from the Group 17 triad, which had all images standing.

## ii. Paintings Inside the Niche (other than donors)

Inside the niche, besides the row of donors at the bottom right (facing), there other painted images. At the far right is a large standing Śākyamuni and on his right a standing Maitreya Bodhisattva, both with colophons. These are significantly large paintings, thus indicating their importance in the scheme of the niche. Also, the readable remains of the main Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription mentions Maitreya Bodhisattva, and the painting in the niche of the standing Bodhisattva may be related to this inscription (we do not know if the main inscription mentions any other images because of its worn-out condition). Though both of these images could have an independent status, it is suggested here that they may be related to the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360), the same text that appears to underlie the

sculptural triad. In the latter portion of that text, Śākyamuni teaches the five evils and five goods in specific dialogue with Maitreya Bodhisattva, who is also named in the last sentence of the sutra.

Above the left shoulder of the Amitāyus sculpture is a painted group of the ten-direction Buddhas, each with a colophon containing the name and direction of the represented Buddha. This group was found by Chang Pao-hsi to follow the names and directions as written in the “60-chüan” *Hua-yen ching* (T 278) translated by Buddhahadra in Chien-k’ang, capital of the [Liu] Sung in the South. This important text was completed in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 420 and revisions were completed in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 422 (see section I.A.a.iii.b)). Though many texts translated into Chinese prior to 425 mention the ten-direction Buddhas as a group, only a few mention them by individual name and direction. Among those the ones presented in the *Hua-yen ching* chüan 4 make a specific match with the names and directions in the Group 6 colophons. This is a significant component in understanding the textual sources for the Group 6 niche program.

Next to the panel of the ten-direction Buddhas at the left side (facing) is a single T’ien-wang guardian. Above is the upper portion (head) of a reborn being in a lotus, apparently a pointed reference to the birth in the Sukhāvati of Amitāyus according to descriptions in the Amitābha/Amitāyus sutras, such as the various translations of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, and clearly in the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360). The appearance of the single T’ien-wang is not readily explainable in terms of texts, though it is an important early datable painted representation, which will serve in the future as comparative material for other T’ien-wang guardian images of the time.

The combination of paintings inside the niche thus show:

- 1) a Śākyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Bodhisattva, possibly related to the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360), most plausibly translated by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün in Chien-k’ang and put out in 421;
- 2) the ten-direction Buddhas based on the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* (T 278) of Buddhahadra’s translation completed “on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month in Eastern Chin Yüan-hsi 2<sup>nd</sup> year (420)” and completed in revision and collation “on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of [Liu] Sung Yung-ch’u 2<sup>nd</sup> year (422);”
- 3) a T’ien-wang guardian;
- 4) a reborn being on a lotus, suggestive of Sukhāvati and the texts of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, including the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360).

This reveals that at least two separate texts are being used in the configuration of the innermost portion of this niche, both of them associated with new translations that took place in the South at Chien-k’ang by Buddhahadra in 420 (the *Hua-yen ching*, revised by 422) and 421 (the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, probably together with Pao-yün). There will be more to say about this below after reviewing the remainder of the paintings.

### iii. Paintings of Iconic Images Outside the Niche (other than donors)

Outside the niche and located above the main inscription and below the two rows of donors are the fragmentary remains of some painted iconic images. Above the main Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription are the colophons of three images (other than donors) in what was originally a row of images that is now quite damaged and worn out. The three remaining colophons of Buddhist images are: “...Yao-wang fo,” “? ? chih p’u-sa” and “...Chieh-yin fo.”

## a) Yao-wang fo

The evolution of Yao-wang fo (The Healing Buddha or Medicine Buddha) is somewhat difficult to unravel. There is a popular pair of Bodhisattvas, Yao-wang p'u-sa and Yao-shang p'u-sa, that figure in the *Lotus Sutra* and other texts (such as the *Yao-wang Yao-shang ching*, which, according to the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Kālayāśas was translated by him at the same time as he translated the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* in Chien-yeh [Chien-k'ang] at the Tao-lin monastery on Chung-shan sometime after 424 and before 442), but these Bodhisattvas are apparently not related to the Buddha called Yao-wang fo. Though the Chinese name Yao-wang fo occurs in a 16-character list of four names at the end of the short sutra *Wei-ts'eng-yu ching* 未曾有經 translated in Later Han by an anonymous translator, these may well have been a later addition. It is, however, interesting to see that this same sutra is written on the North Wall of Cave 169 (in Group 14), though the end portion does not survive there. The name Yao-wang fo does, however, occur briefly in the *Fo-shuo hua-shou ching* 佛說華手經 translated by Kumārajīva in 406 A.D., and also in a list of Buddhas in the *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra in Chien-k'ang (completed in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 420 and collated/revised by 12<sup>th</sup> month of 422). This at least confirms that Yao-wang fo was used in Chinese translations since at least the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The Yao-wang fo Buddha appears in a prominent place in the Group 6 paintings (at the head of the row of images just above the main Chien-hung/Hsüan-hsiao inscription (Fig. 7.10c), indicating that Yao-wang fo was a Buddha of some importance at the time for the donors of the Group 6 ensemble. Ping-ling ssu is known through the ages as a mysterious place and one that is strongly connected to worship of the Medicine Buddha. This image could be one early manifestation of that tradition. Of further interest is the fact that the reliable citations of Yao-wang fo appear in the 406 translation of Kumārajīva of the *Hua-shou ching* and in the *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra. The latter is clearly used as the textual reference for the ten-direction Buddha painting located within the Group 6 niche, as discussed in section (I.A.i.a.iii.c)).

## b) Chieh-yin fo 接引佛 and ?? chih p'u-sa □□至菩薩

The partial surviving colophon inscription with the characters ?? chih-p'u-sa could possibly refer to the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta,<sup>107</sup> one of the two great Bodhisattvas attending Amitābha/Amitāyus. No image survives in this painting, but is clearly next to and accompanying a Buddha (only the halo remains) whose colophon has the remaining characters naming “Chieh-yin fo.” This colophon is intriguing. A character search of the major texts translated into Chinese by ca. 420 for the name of a Chieh-yin Buddha did not yield any results. However, it appears as a phrase used to describe Amitābha/Amitāyus in the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* 觀無量壽佛經 (T 365) where the characters “chieh-yin” (though not “chieh-yin fo”) are used twice in the text in speaking of Amitāyus. The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (T 365) is said to have been translated by Kālayāśas during the years of 424-442 under the [Liu] Sung, according to the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Kālayāśas, the earliest known record for this translation (see Chapter 6, section II.2.c.17a). However, since there is very little substantiating evidence for the translation of this text, it is still held in some skeptical doubt by scholars regarding its translation by Kālayāśas. The appearance of this Group 6 colophon naming a Buddha called “Chieh-yin fo” gives some reason to think that the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (T 365) text was

<sup>107</sup> Translated as Te-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa in the colophon of the left attendant sculpture inside the Group 6 niche. However, the characters may have been somewhat different in this colophon, such as Ta-shih-chih p'u-sa, which is another variant seen in texts.

known by the time of the Group 6 ensemble, which, according to our study here is most likely the *tz'u* date of 424 (rather than the *nien-hao* date of 420). This could lend some credence to the possibility that the Group 6 inscription is following a translation, possibly the one by Kālayaśas. Since other elements of Group 6 suggest knowledge of texts translated in Chien-k'ang by Buddhahadra in the early 420's, it is also quite possible that the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* was translated by Kālayaśas from the same area in ca. 424 and could have become known in Western Chin by the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day of that year when the Group 6 ensemble was made.

Kālayaśas is also cited in the *Kao-seng chuan* biography as traveling to Chiang-ling, and then to Min-shu (Szechwan) during his sojourn in the South, and then returning to Chiang-ling. The biography especially notes that he was teaching and forming meditation groups in these areas. Given the rapidity of other texts seeming to arrive in Western Ch'in relatively soon after they were translated in Chien-k'ang, it could well be that this is another such case. It might be speculated that Tao-jung, one of the prominent monk donors of Group 6 and originally from P'eng-ch'eng in the South, himself may have made several trips back and forth from the South to Ping-ling ssu, his old meditation site from his meditation days ca. 400 before he went to Ch'ang-an to work with Kumārajīva. Be that as it may, here we can see that it is particularly important to pay careful attention to Buddhist art as possibly providing rare primary data that can sometimes yield important information regarding Buddhist history and the translations of Buddhist texts.

#### d. *Textual Aspects and the Iconographic Program of Group 6*

It appears that at least two major texts were used as a significant basis for a number of images in the Group 6 ensemble: the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360) and the *Hua-yen ching* (T 278). There is a possibility that a third text, the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* (T 365), also came into play with regard to one of the images outside the niche (above the main inscription). Their usage here for Group 6, which is dated to 424 (or 420) therefore implies, as we have just noted above, a rather rapid transmission from Chien-k'ang in the South where they were all translated, to the territory of the Western Ch'in and to Ping-ling ssu. The *Hua-yen ching* is the most certainly dated: ca. early in 420 when the translation was completed, and early in 422 when the revision and collation was completed. The *Wu-liang-shou ching* is still debated among scholars, but the currently most favored theory suggests a translation by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün, put out in 421 (according to one notice in the CSTCC). The *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* is said (but not confirmed) to have been translated by Kālayaśas between 424-442.

From the study presented in Chapter 6, it is most plausible that the *Wu-liang-shou ching* is the basis of the Group 6 Amitāyus sculpture triad in Cave 169. This factor lends strong credence to the Buddhahadra/Pao-yün theory of translation for this text, particularly if the Hsüan-hsiao (Jupiter cycle) *tz'u* date of 424 is the more accurate of the two possible dates for Group 6, as it has been suggested above. If we consider the *nien-hao* Chien-hung date of 420, then the Group 6 niche main images would have been made earlier than the publication of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün in 421. Similarly, the Hsüan-hsiao *tz'u* date (424) would fit more appropriately with the date for the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*, if one considers that it could have been put out early in 424, or at least taught by Kālayaśas by that time in some form or other. Certainly the Hsüan-hsiao *tz'u* date of 424 is more compatible with the evidences for all three of these texts most clearly related to Group 6 compared with the Chien-hung *nien-hao* date of 420. This factor strongly favors the Hsüan-hsiao date of 424 for the Group 6 niche main inscription. It has also been noted above that the dates of the Jupiter cycle are used from ancient times in China and are more universal and stable than the *nien-hao* dates, which change with the will and decree of individual rulers.



Considering the overall program of Group 6 from the view of textual basis, it appears that at least two and possibly three texts are present as the main sources for the sculptures and paintings. This means that not just one text forms the iconography, but there is for some reason (or reasons) a certain combination of texts. This creates a panoply or varied mixture that is assembled according to the wish of the donor(s) and/or according to the recommendation of some Buddhist master(s). In this case there is an uncanny confluence of texts that appear to have been newly translated in Chien-k'ang by Buddhahadra, Buddhahadra with Pao-yün, and Kālayāśas (all in collaboration with Chinese monks). This could imply some relation of the Group 6 donors with those translations, or some particular reason for influence from the South, rather than, for example, texts translated by Kumārajīva from Ch'ang-an.

It is difficult to speculate on the reason for the combination of these particular texts, but there apparently was a wish by the donors (or some of the donors) to incorporate all three, and to also include Yao-wang fo into the mix, even though there was no major text devoted to this Buddha until later in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (unless one accepts *Kuan ting ch'i wan erh ch'ien shen wang hu pi ch'iu chou ching* 灌頂七萬二千神王護比丘呪經, translated by Śrīmitra early in the Eastern Chin at Chien-yeh (same as Chien-k'ang)).

Group 6 affords a case in point regarding the method apparently at work in Chinese Buddhist art at this time of composing complex ensembles of images that may serve in understanding other ensembles, especially those now surviving in the cave temples of Kansu and later at Yün-kang. There can be a combination of texts, perhaps in a hierarchy, such as the precedence given to the *Wu-liang-shou ching* in this case, and then several secondary texts, in this case the *Hua-yen ching* and then possibly the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*. It seems that such a combination of texts should be considered as one schematic method in the Buddhist art of China being used at least as early as 424 A.D. as witnessed in the Group 6 ensemble.

Within the program of Cave 169 as a whole, the Group 6 ensemble stands out as independent and not composed in relation to the earlier groups of images on the West, East and South walls, which mostly seem to follow the *Lotus Sutra*, and sets of multiple Buddhas, at least to a great extent. The *Lotus Sutra*, however, appears to be absent from Group 6 in favor of new iconographies based on newly translated texts from the South centered on Amitāyus, but including some elements of the *Hua-yen ching* and possibly of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* as well as texts on Yao-wang fo. It could be that various images desired by the donors were included (such as Yao-wang fo), not for doctrinal reasons, but for personal preferences.<sup>108</sup> Certain donors may have requested special images; for example, the husband and wife pair appear to have wanted the Chieh-yin fo Buddha and the member of the Ch'i-fu family to be associated with the standing Buddha (probably Śākyamuni) below the two rows of donors under the main inscription. Others may have wanted the large painted Śākyamuni and Maitreya that are just inside the niche and near the main inscription, which, as we have seen, at least mentions Maitreya Bodhisattva prominently. Thus we see a mixed grouping of images—not a narrative sequence and not focus solely on one textual source. This precedent clearly exists in Group 6. Though it may well have been used earlier, it is just that Group 6 can be discerned because of the remains of inscriptions. It shows that when studying the programs of other cave temples or ensembles in Buddhist art, the usage of a combination of texts is a likely to be a strong possibility in understanding the overall program.

<sup>108</sup> This could be the case with the Śākyamuni and Maitreya paintings inside the niche, but these also have a strong possibility to relate to the *Wu-liang-shou ching*.



e. *Significance Points with Respect to Cave 169*

It is clear from the style of the wall paintings that all the configurations within the niche and around the main inscription were part of a single unit, and, from the study offered here on Group 6, that all the sculpture and paintings of this group are most plausibly dated to 424 A.D. This niche yields a number of especially significant data which can be summarized in the following points:

- 1) Group 6 presents a reliable dated marker in the chronology of Cave 169, which in turn is instrumental in unlocking the chronology of other sites in Kansu;
- 2) it contains individually inscribed images whose identity together substantiates an entire iconographic program of an ensemble of sculptures and paintings that show a combination of texts that is different from the texts used in the earlier groups in Cave 169;
- 3) there is special focus on Amitāyus of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the ten direction Buddhas of the *Hua-yen ching* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*), and Maitreya Bodhisattva and Śākyamuni Buddha (probably as related to the *Wu-liang-shou ching*);
- 4) the lay donors are of high class from throughout the Western Ch'in territories, and particularly noted are the high officials of Nan-an, T'ien-shui and Chin ch'eng (Lan chou), that is, all the important cities within the Western Ch'in kingdom at the time (except for the capital, Fu-han);
- 5) the paintings of these donors reveal that the dress of this official class is Han Chinese;
- 6) two of the monk figures are known from other sources: T'an-ma-pi and Tao-jung, who lead the procession in the top line of the donor figures, and could be intimately involved with the making of this niche and with the prominent line of donors that are involved with this niche;
- 7) the lay donors may be followers of T'an-ma-pi, who was a foreigner, known from other sources to have been in the area of the Western Ch'in at the time of the famous Chinese meditation monk Hsüan-ka'o;
- 8) there are numerous indications of a connection with South China in the usage of texts, in the precedents for interest in Amitāyus, in the Han dress of the donors, in the painting style of the wall painting, and possibly in the sculptural style as well;
- 9) the Amitāyus sculpture shows a body form similar to the 423 [Liu] Sung Maitreya (tall and straight, non-muscular, so this could be southern style);<sup>109</sup>
- 10) by the 420's Amitāyus had become the object of devotion of prominent people and monks in the South, the most notable being Hui-yüan (d. 416) at Lu shan, an extremely influential presence in the Buddhist world of China and who supported Buddhābhaddra, translator of the *Hua-yen ching* and probably also of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (together with Pao-yün);
- 11) the dhyāna mudrā seems to be established as the mudrā for Amitāyus;
- 12) the Group 6 niche is different from the sets of multiple Buddhas, the Buddhas of the Three Times and ten-directions, the thousand Buddhas, and Śākyamuni of the *Lotus Sutra*, and though the ten-direction Buddhas and Śākyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Bodhisattva are present in the Group 6 niche, the main focus has turned to Amitāyus—the main Buddha of Hui-yüan's religious life and teaching at his monastery;
- 13) the powerful precedent of the well-known event of the vow of the group of 123 monks and lay persons together with Hui-yüan before an image of Amitābha at the Tung-lin ssu on Lu shan on September 11, 402 may well have been, if not a direct influence, at least probably known to

<sup>109</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.82c, d.

- the monk and lay members of the Group 6 niche involved in the dedication of this niche with Amitāyus and his two great Bodhisattvas as well as accompanying wall paintings in Cave 169;
- 14) the Group 6 imagery probability shows that the Buddhahadra translation of the *Hua-yen ching* was disseminated to Western Ch'in within a relatively short time after the completion of its revision and collation in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 422 A.D.;
  - 15) the *tz'u* date of 424 (3<sup>rd</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day) for the Group 6 main dedicatory inscription supports a 421 A.D. date for the Buddhahadra/Pao-yün translation of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*;
  - 16) the 422 A.D. date for the completion of the collation/revision of Buddhahadra translation of the *Hua-yen ching* translation is supported by the *tz'u* date of 424;
  - 17) the *nien-hao* date of 420 (Western Ch'in Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year (420), 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day) in the Group 6 main inscription is not reasonably acceptable, considering the completion date of the *Hua-yen ching* translation, which by several records is stated as 420 (Eastern Chin Yüan-hsi 2<sup>nd</sup> year (420), 6<sup>th</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day, because the time for transmission of the text to Western Ch'in in time to utilize in making the images of Group 6 is not sufficient or matching;
  - 18) so the records concerning the date of completion of the translation as well as the date of completion of the collation/revision of Buddhahadra's translation of the *Hua-yen ching* in Chien-k'ang, a text which was clearly used as a basis for part of the Group 6 imagery (the ten-direction Buddhas), tend to confirm that the *tz'u* 次 date of 424 is the appropriate date for Group 6 rather than the *nien-hao* 年號 date of 420;
  - 19) the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching* is not the main source of the niche images, but it may be related to the "chieh yin fo" 接引佛 inscription above the main inscription for Group 6;
  - 20) in that case, it can be supportive of an early date, i.e., ca. 424, for the Kālayāśas translation of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*;
  - 21) with Group 6, the imagery in Cave 169 appears to have changed to a different set of textual sources than those which seem to prevail on the West, South and East Walls, which all seem to show strong *Lotus Sutra* affiliation;
  - 22) new Buddhist elements, apparently from the South, are presented in Group 6, primarily the two major texts of the *Wu-liang-shou ching* and the *Hua-yen ching*, both translated by Buddhahadra in Chien-k'ang;
  - 23) date of 424 for Group 6 has significance for showing relation to texts *Wu-liang-shou ching*, *Hua-yen ching*, and possibly the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* and the texts regarding Yao-wang fo, as well as having importance in relation to other art, including that of Gandhāra;
  - 24) it reveals the tendency to incorporate more than one text within a single setting—this may be typical in many cases in China by this time;
  - 25) the T'ien-wang, one of the earliest representations in Chinese art, may stand for all four T'ien-wang as the protectors of the four quarters, and whose lands are on the sides of Mt. Sumeru, as a representative of the Desire Realm beings, or, like in some Gandhāra triads or pentads, etc., it might indicate Brahmā;
  - 26) the ten-direction Buddhas are those cited in the *Hua-yen ching*, but they are done in such a way as to indicate an infinite array of ten-direction Buddhas, so they function as an infinitely unfolding background;
  - 27) within that infinite unfolding background the Buddha land of Amitāyus appears as the sculpted images and as the reborn soul on the lotus above;

- 28) so the Pure Land of Amitāyus is one great one amidst the infinite unfolding array suggested by the *Hua-yen ching* ten-direction Buddhas;
- 29) the whole niche holds together as a unit expressing infinite Buddha lands among which is the great pure land of Amitāyus described in the *Wu-liang-shou ching*;
- 30) the two primary monks in the dedication of the Group 6 ensemble consist of one prominent foreigner and one prominent Chinese—a reflection of the typical condition of the times.

### B. Group 7: Two Large Standing Buddha Sculptures

This group of two remaining sculptures, including one well-preserved, splendid sculpture, may originally have consisted of three standing Buddhas. In that case, these could have been a major configuration of the Buddhas of the Three Times.

#### 1. Image Analysis

To the right (facing) of the Group 6 main inscription panel are the remains of two large standing Buddha sculptures made of wood frame and clay (Figs. 7.16a, b, c). Their mandorlas are connected, obviously indicating that they are meant to be part of a single configuration (total H. of the group is 3.15 m [10.33 ft.] and surviving width is 2.4m [7.8 ft.]).<sup>110</sup> The left (facing) Buddha's mandorla overlaps that of the right Buddha, but there is not a similar overlap on the other side of the right Buddha's mandorla, though there is some projecting broken clay suggesting there was more clay wall screen construction at the side. According to Teng Yü-hsiang, there originally were three standing Buddhas in this group.<sup>111</sup> It is possible that a third Buddha was located on a ledge (that now has some remains of a painted lotus pedestal) at the right (facing) of this intact standing Buddha (Figs. 6.7, 7.16b), but it would have to have been located out of line and higher up since there are surviving paintings on the wall to the height of the intact Buddha's knees (unless there was some repair to the wall after the Buddha was destroyed). The rough edge of the mandorla at the right (facing) of the intact Buddha and the remains of what appears to have been a painted lotus pedestal could suggest that a possible third Buddha could have been behind the central (intact) Buddha's mandorla (Fig. 7.16b).<sup>112</sup> If there were three Buddhas, it would probably be the Buddhas of the Three Times, a theme also seen in Groups 4, 9 and 14, and possibly Group 16. If there were originally only two Buddhas, they may have been Śākyamuni and Maitreya or possibly Śākyamuni and Dīpaṃkara.

Though the standing Buddha at the far left (facing) is broken and lost except for part of the left side of the body, and its left hand is mostly repaired, the standing Buddha next to this image is almost perfectly preserved (H. 2.50 m [8.2 ft.]) (Fig. 7.16c). Only the two hands, part of the mandorla and apparently the lotus pedestal are now lost. The right hand, held up a little higher than waist level, may

<sup>110</sup> The "back screen" is 2.90 m tall and 1.65 m wide (broken). Teng (1994), p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> Teng (1994), p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Chin Wei-no suggests that the sculptures of Group 7 were made after those of Group 9 because of the awkward disparity of proportions of the Group 7 Buddhas. He reasons that the presence of the Group 9 Buddhas necessitated this kind of change. He also suggests that both Groups 9 and 7 were made prior to Group 6, based on his observations regarding the wall surface and the overlapping situation of the clay surfaces around Groups 9, 7 and 6. Chin Wei-no, "Bukkyō geijutsu no kyōryū ni okeru Heirinji sekkutsu," (The Inter-communication of Buddhist Art with Respect to the Ping-ling ssu Stone Caves), in *Heirinji*, Tokyo, 1986, p. 215. Though there may be some cause to interpret this area of the wall in such a way, it is extremely difficult to determine overlapping surfaces of clay and the time period in which additions or repairs may have been made.

have been in the *abhaya mudra* and the left hand, held forward at waist level, probably held an edge of the robe, but this is not certain. The gestures are a little different from the Niche No. 1 Buddha (Fig. 3.12) and appear to have been closer to those of the Northern Wei bronze standing Maitreya dated 443 (Fig. 3.19).

The Group 7 Buddha stands frontally with feet planted quite widely apart, legs straight and without indication of the knees, and massive, rounded shoulders moving the arms away from the body revealing completely the strong yet generalized shape of the body. There is some interest in the subtly naturalistic modeling of the chest and abdomen areas that complement the powerful shape, but it is not as subtle as that of the Niche No. 1 Buddha, nor as softly molded as the 443 Buddha, which is less robust and has more of a Chinese rather than Western aesthetic. It is a different model from the standing Buddhas of Group 4 (Fig. 6.6) with their thick mass and sloping shoulders, the Buddha in Group 18 (Fig. 4.7) with its elegantly shaped form, and the Buddha of Group 22 (Fig. 5.45) with its slim body and less powerful body. Also, the arm-hand positions are different in the Group 7 Buddha than those used in these other Cave 169 standing Buddhas.

The body form is interestingly consistent in many ways with that of contemporary Gupta styles, such as seen in the Mathurā Buddha dated 434 from Govindnagar (Fig. 7.17) and with the Udyagiri images of ca. 400-420's (Fig. 6.14e). It conforms to the proportions and smooth shaping of the masculine form associated with the Gupta style rather than with the earlier Kushana Gandhāran form. In particular, the large, flaring shape of the massive shoulders is a notable feature of the Gupta period Mathurā school sculpture. Similarly, the tendency to draw the robe tight around the form and for it to act as a kind of backing that sets the form off in high relief is indicative of the emerging Gupta styles. The early Gupta style (ca. 400) also appears in Afghan images from Kham Zargar as seen in Fig. 7.18, which probably dates around 400 and perhaps reflects changes of the Gupta period in the region of Gandhāra. Though there may be some relation of the Group 7 sculptures to the Style VI sculptures at Rawak, Khotan (Fig. 5.47), the connection seems more pertinent with Mathurā or Afghanistan. There can be little doubt that it partakes of contemporary modes in Buddha statues and does not harken back to Kushana period styles. It can be termed a Chinese rendering of the early Gupta period style. In that matter it reveals what appears to be a rapid acquisition and assimilation of contemporary art styles from the West, notably the early Mathurā Gupta school and possibly the Gupta period Afghan school.

The linear configuration of the Ping-ling ssu standing Buddha is ingenious in its harmony of varying types of lines and unifying of complicated yet bold patterning. Over the upper chest and arms the patterns are basically alternating deep incised creases and thin incised line in schematic parallel delineation making broad U-shaped folds on the chest. This is a new technique first seen in Cave 169 in the Group 6 Amitāyus of 424 (Fig. 6.8b). The most pertinent similar comparison is with the clay sculptures of Shorchuk Ming-oi near Karashahr on the Northern Silk Route, where it is used prolifically in the sculptures from Cave 5, which was dated in Vol. II to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>113</sup> Though the Group 7 Buddha does not date that late, it possibly shows earlier influences from the area of Karashahr, which may have used this technique for awhile. For example, similar strong incised lines (but not alternating strong and weak as in the Group 7 Buddha and the Shorchuk Ming-oi Cave 5 sculptures) are used in the seated Bodhisattvas of Temple A20 at Shorchuk Ming-oi, which was dated to early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Vol. II.<sup>114</sup> Karashahr is an interesting site and one which may have some relation

<sup>113</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 822 and figs. 5.70n, p and q.

<sup>114</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 752-753 and figs. 5.18a, c.

with China. Fa-hsien, for instance, noted when he was there for 2½ months in 400 that “the discipline is strict so the Chinese monks who come here are all discontent with the monk’s rules.”<sup>115</sup>

Diagonally slanted lines over the arms emphasize the roundness of the massive shoulders and upper arms, a typically Mathurā Gupta Indian shape. These lines then converge to form a nearly vertical pattern in the robe as it falls and frames the body. Four molded U-shaped step pleats fill the upper crotch area from which vertical pleats abruptly fill in the space between the legs. The lines from the side of the upper body continue and slant diagonally over the thighs to terminate above the knee area, which is left bare. Below the knees U-shaped incised lines appear, some of them alternating heavy and thin. The patterning is much more assured and dramatic than the U-shaped incised lines used in the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.26a) and in the drapery configurations of the Group 22 sculptures (Fig. 5.45).

The long side hems of the robe have small wave patterns in each of the two closely spaced parallel edges. This is a tighter pattern of wavy hems than appears in the Group 22 Buddha’s robe (Fig. 5.45). There are a few widely separated, rectilinear hems of the broad pleats at the bottom edge of the outer robe. This patterning is known in the Rawak Style VI sculptures (Fig. 5.47). The undergarment shows below as a combination of U-shaped folds on the legs and stiff, closely spaced vertical incised line pleats on the sides and between the legs. The edge of the undergarment is finished with a saw-tooth zigzag pattern. This kind of pattern appears in Rawak Style VI Buddhas in particular (Fig. 5.47) and in some stone sculptures from Mathurā (Fig. 5.35). In less refined manner, the hems of the three Buddhas of Group 23 in Cave 169 also have a zigzag pattern (Fig. 5.30a). The cowl fold on the Group 7 Buddha is raised and the flap over the left shoulder flares out in back and to the side in a sweeping arc. It has a rather vigorously wavy outer edge and a pinch-pleated bottom edge. The vigorously wavy hem over the left shoulder is a departure from earlier styles in Buddha images in Cave 169, or as seen in the Niche No. 1 Buddha. Mostly the edges over the left shoulder have been fairly subdued, flat and straight edged, or with a moderate or delicate hem pattern.

The widely spaced, regular and bold incised fold patterns on the arms, torso and legs are also quite close to the style of the Devnimori stucco Buddhas of ca. 380.<sup>116</sup> The Nelson-Atkins Museum small bronze standing Maitreya Buddha utilizes a similar linear approach, though somewhat more simplified (Fig. 4.10). The vigorous approach seen in this style carries over into other images of the North Wall, such as several of the Group 9 Buddhas, and the seated Buddha at the left (facing) of Group 14 and Group 3 (Figs. 7.48a and 7.53a). There is vitality in the lines as well as in the body of this Group 7 Buddha, imparting a high sense of energy and aggressive presence to this image.

The head of the Group 7 Buddha (Figs. 7.19) is stronger and bolder in its features than the Group 6 Amitāyus of 424 (Fig. 6.10a), though it can be seen to probably relate to the forms of that image. The carving is rather sharp and bold in its fashioning of the eyes with their clear lids, the nose with a sharp-edged bridge, and the mouth which is similar in shape to the Group 23 right two Buddhas (Fig. 5.41), but is much more strongly cut.

The Group 7 intact standing Buddha is one of the most splendid of the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 sculptures and one of the most important standing Buddha figures now surviving from cave temples of the northwest region in the Sixteen Kingdoms period. Its robust and powerful figure and its complex yet coherently composed linear configurations mark it as a masterpiece of the Chinese adaptation

<sup>115</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 725.

<sup>116</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.91a.



of the Buddha image and of the high development of the assertive, dynamic styles of the northwest region.

The Buddha to the left (west side) is very similar to the larger one, but utilizes some uniform wide incised lines for the folds of the outer robe and a series of narrow vertical folds for the pleats of the undergarment. The robes of these two Buddhas are red and the underside is painted green. There is only a barely defined semi-circular pedestal for both. These may have been damaged and repaired at some later time.

## 2. *Mandorlas*

The designs in the mandorlas of these two standing Buddhas continue some elements noted in the Group 6 mandorlas, but there are some changes and some additional new elements as well. The narrow wavy flame patterns and rows of white pearls are common to the halos of Groups 22, 6 and others (Figs. 5.45, 5.53, 6.11a, b), but the pearls in the left (facing) mandorla of Group 7 have an added feature of alternating green and red dots in each white pearl (Fig. 7.20c), a feature that is also seen in the mandorlas of Group 14 discussed below (Figs. 7.48a, b). The body halo of the right Buddha has a narrow white band with a very refined twisted rope pattern (Fig. 7.20a). The twisted rope pattern was first noted in the mandorla of one of the Group 23 seated Buddhas (Fig. 5.39), but the style is looser than that of the Group 7 example. The head halo of the right (facing) image has a central lotus drawn in black with a two-toned wash of white and green—a new feature and one which will be used in some of the later works of this wall as well, but in a more flamboyant manner than seen here (Fig. 7.19). The outer wide band of the head halo contains 12 seated dhyānāsana Buddhas (Figs. 7.19, 7.20b). These Buddhas are interestingly painted, some facing different directions (also a feature of the Amitāyus' head halo in Group 6 of ca. 424). Each sits on a circular lotus pedestal and has a head halo, mandorla and canopy. The stem of the lotus that supports one of the small Buddha's pedestals can be seen above the Buddha statue's right shoulder (Fig. 7.19). These small Buddhas have tall torsos and varied coloring with alternating black, green, and red. The tiny white dots along the edges of the garment borders and around the uṣṇīṣa of these small Buddhas are unusual, but can also be noted in some of the mandorlas of the ten-direction Buddhas of the Group 6 niche (Fig. 7.3a). The background of this Buddha band is filled in with spiral black lines on a green ground (Fig. 7.20b). White lotuses float in this "spiral" motif along with the seated Buddhas. The spiral motif is an interesting one, possibly suggesting water or mystical energy. Such designs are not readily seen in halos of this time. Perhaps, however, they are related to the spiral forms appearing in the clay head halos of the Group VI images at Rawak Stupa near Khotan (Fig. 7.21a), dated in Vol. II to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>117</sup>

The body halo portion of the mandorlas of the Group 7 standing Buddhas has celestial musicians (Fig. 7.20c), a feature already seen in the halo of Amitāyus in Group 6 dated 424, but in the case of Group 7 they are more detailed in the drawing and utilize the more classic linear painting methods rather than the boneless wash technique seen in the Group 6 example (Figs. 6.11a, b). These Group 7 celestials have long bodies and limbs, rather resembling spirit images in earlier Chinese art, but also somewhat similar to some of the figures in the wall paintings of Jātaka stories at Kizil that depict Brahmin type figures that wear short loin cloths. Their postures are lively, individualistic and even somewhat incredulously bending. At the juncture with the head halo of the left (ruined) Buddha, there is a

<sup>117</sup> Rhie (1999), fig. 4.61.



flaming jewel (upper left in Fig. 7.20c) whose shape is close to the flaming jewel near the donors inside the Group 6 niche (Fig. 7.13c), though there is clearly some difference in the slimmer and tighter jewel form in Group 7, which begins to resemble that seen in the Northern Wei bronze in Fig. 6.13a from ca. 470's. The style of flame pattern (hook-like shape) seen in both the Group 6 and Group 7 flaming jewels can interestingly be seen in some fragments from Khotan, such as the wooden piece, probably of a mandorla, in Fig. 7.21b.

The top of the encompassing mandorla has a stunning overarching design of light colored, long, complex, curved flames set against a black ground (Fig. 7.16b). It is different in design from the delicate intricacies of the plume-like crest of the mandorla of the Amitāyus of Group 6 of 424 (Fig. 6.8a, 6.12a, b), which is highly complex and elaborate. Rather, the Group 7 mandorla has clear, sharp patterning that is powerful and energetically curved. The effect is rich and handsome, but less ephemeral and subtle than the Group 6 crest. A remarkable evolution of the Chinese mandorla designs in the period ca. 415-425 can be witnessed in comparing the Group 22 (Figs. 5.44, 5.45), Group 6 and the Group 7 examples in Cave 169. These three beautifully painted mandorlas are rare survivals that bear witness to the stunning artistic evolution of the early Chinese Buddhist mandorlas. They reveal the highly developed designs already used in halo designs by the beginning of the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. These examples presage the magnificent mandorlas in stone in the Yün-kang caves beginning in the late 460's. Such evidences are important in understanding that the styles of the early Yün-kang caves evolved from an already established Buddhist art within China and did not just suddenly erupt full-blown. Until the discoveries in Kansu it has not been possible to document the rich developments in Chinese mandorla designs in their early stages. The examples in Cave 169 show the splendid contribution of the Chinese aesthetic to the art of the mandorla.

### 3. *Comments on Dating*

The connections of the Group 7 sculptures with the early Gupta period art of Mathurā and Devnī-mori and possibly Afghanistan as well as some links with Rawak in Khotan suggest that there was a new infusion of artistic style related to the West and different from the style of the Group 6 images, which have a more refined and elegant style possibly related to modes from South China. In dating, the Group 7 Buddhas are likely to be after the 424 Group 6 images and before the 443 Northern Wei bronze Maitreya (Fig. 3.19). Some of the quality of massive body appears in the Contemplative Bodhisattva in the Wei Wen-lang stele from near Ch'ang-an dated 424 (Fig. 5.34c) and in the massive, though much smaller figures in the Chi-te stone stupa from Tun-huang dated 426 (Fig. 5.11) and notable in some of the small wooden statues from Kizil in Figs. 5.13a, b. The period from 412-428 was a flourishing one for the Western Ch'in, and it is likely that the splendid Group 7 Buddha images were made prior to 428, after which a decline probably occurred during the period of Ch'i-fu Mu-mo (428-431), when disasters began to accumulate for the Western Ch'in, including a devastating earthquake in 429. One can surmise that a date ca. 425 would be reasonably supported by the evidences discussed above. The Group 7 sculptures most likely date after the Group 6 niche, but the sculpture and painting style is of a different tradition, possibly one from the Ch'ang-an area, that incorporates more of the Western flavor than Group 6. Though there may not be much separation in time, there is a difference in stylistic lineage. The fact that these two different lineages could appear rather close in time bespeaks of the flourishing nature of Buddhist art in this region in the 420's, which was also the height of the Western Ch'in.

## II. NORTH WALL: LOWER ZONE

The lower zone on the north wall has surviving images and wall paintings that stretch from below the Group 6 Amitāyus niche of 424 over a more or less flat surface beneath the Group 7 Buddha sculptures and then over to the edge of the gaping opening of this large cave (Figs. 6.1, 6.2, 6.7 and 7.16a). Group 8, consisting of two seated Buddhas, probably of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna, will not be considered here since it is an addition from the Northern Wei period, early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Group 9, at the western side and next to Group 8, is a triad of standing Buddha sculptures. This sculptural group is followed in the central section of the wall, which has been smoothed out by surfacing the rough wall in clay, by a long area of wall paintings in Groups 10-13. These important, now famous, paintings, are remarkably fresh and well-preserved, though there is some loss and fading in the upper and lower reaches. This area is followed by Group 14, which is comprised of three seated Buddha sculptures, a few wall paintings, a sutra panel and the remains of the lower part of a large standing sculpture. The Group 3 niche and nearby painting, as well as Group 15 and Group 19, the latter two both artificial wall panels of the thousand Buddhas, will be discussed at the end of this section.

A. *Group 9: Three Standing Buddha Sculptures*

These three Buddha sculptures are positioned as a group below the standing Buddhas of Group 7 and the Group 6 main inscription (Figs. 7.16b, 7.22). The images are smaller than life size, but the central image is slightly taller than the other two. Total height of the group is 1.35m [4½ ft.]. Some red pigments remain on the outer robe and some malachite green for the underside of the robe in all these images. Only the pedestal of the left (facing) image remains intact. This group probably represents the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present and Future), a theme also probably occurring in Group 4 and possibly Group 7, all on the North Wall, as well as possibly Group 16 on the West Wall (Fig. 4.49). Each one of the Group 9 Buddhas is a different variation of a similar style, though the one at the left (facing) appears to have been made by a different artist from the other two (Fig. 7.22), and possibly at a slightly different time. The heads are decidedly round, rather soft, and proportionately a little large. The features are mild and not forceful, but are executed a bit freely and coarsely compared to others in this cave. Though these figures overall are not as powerful as the Buddha of Group 7, nor as elegant as that of Group 6, they probably do not date far from either, probably between 420-428.

The Buddha on the left (west) side holds his right hand to his chest and his left hand rests against his left thigh and holds the hem of the saṅghāṭī (Fig. 7.23). This gesture of the right hand is difficult to interpret. The hand does not appear to hold anything or to hold the garment. It could simply be a gesture with the hand on the chest, possibly similar to that seen in some standing Buddhas from Haḍḍa (Fig. 4.12) and not a particular mudrā. The stocky proportions enhance an aura of wiry toughness in the figure. The body is more massive than that of the Group 6 Amitāyus of 424, and projects a sense of naturalistic molding of the limbs and torso, which is complemented by a chubby face and thick neck. Though the incised lines of the drapery folds generally follow the schematic patterning typical in the images of this cave, and are rather close to the patterning in the Group 7 standing Buddha (Fig. 7.16c), there is obviously less interest in the clear grouping and dominating linear framework of the drapery. Instead, interest is turned to a more casual and somewhat less structured sense of lively vigor and freedom imparted to the contours of the edges and hems. The result is an image that is more important for its solid, somewhat more natural mass and the informal arrangement of lines and borders that give a quality of natural movement to the image. The hems of the robes do not have a clean, repetitive pattern

but are totally asymmetric, loose and lacking in tightly controlled repetitive structure. The abstract quality notable in earlier images is minimal in favor of a more casual and natural image. This is a major difference from the other standing Buddha images seen hitherto in Cave 169, and probably indicates an injection of a new style by an artist that seems to be cognizant of styles based on Western images.

In fact, this particular Buddha image is interesting for its comparative similarities with some images from Shotorak (Afghanistan) and Rawak (Khotan) and possibly from elsewhere in Kansu (to be discussed in Vol. IV). For example, the stocky shape, wiry movements of the drapery and slightly agitated and scattered appearance of the drapery folds and contours are very similar with the style of the stone Buddha from Shotorak in Fig. 7.24a, which probably dates in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Although the Chinese image has certain differences in technique, such as incised lines instead of raised rib folds, and the details are not the same, nevertheless, it shows a number of general, similar traits that suggest possible sources for this Group 9 style.<sup>118</sup> Also both this Shotorak Buddha and Group 9 Buddha were mentioned in Vol. I as having some similarities with the small Buddhas of Style V at Rawak Stupa (seen in between the larger standing Buddhas in Fig. 7.24b).<sup>119</sup> It is possible that this Group 9 image reflects some more or less contemporary Buddhist art styles of the Afghanistan and Khotan region.

The mandorla utilizes mainly green and white with apparently one wide rim of red in both the head and body halos. The flame patterns are the narrow wavy variety as seen in the halos of the Buddhas of Groups 16, 23, 22, 6 and 7, one of the pervasive designs in the Cave 169 images. The outer rim is a bolder and simpler version of the complex flame design as seen on the outer rim of Te-ta-shih-chih (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) Bodhisattva in Group 6 dated 424 and of the Group 22 Bodhisattva (Figs. 6.15b, 5.53). There is also a rim of white pearls. The round head halo is set within the larger mandorla which, though somewhat ruined at the top, seems to curve to a peak (Fig. 7.16b). As far as can be determined, mandorlas of previously discussed images in Cave 169 did not have a clearly peaked mandorla, so this may be a new style, which also occurs in the other two images of Group 9 and in the paintings of Groups 11-13, as will be discussed below. Elements of the designs in the mandorla suggest that it relates to some designs in the mandorlas of the Group 22, 6 and 7 images, but shows some bold variations that suggest a date later though not far removed, perhaps ca. 425. The lotus pedestal has particularly large double-lobed petals—larger than any others in this cave—and the image freely steps over the pod in much the same fashion as the Bodhisattvas in the paintings of Groups 11 and 12 discussed below.

The central and right side Buddhas of Group 9 are quite alike in posture: holding the robe with the left hand placed against the chest and the right hand hanging down and catching up a part of the hem of the saṅghāṭī (Figs. 7.22, 7.25a, b). It has already been noted that this is the most popular standing Buddha posture in this cave, so there is some continued interest in this form, which in this case seems to be used in relation to the Buddhas of the Three Times, similar to the standing Buddhas of Group 4 (Fig. 6.6). Neither of these figures is as broad as the left Buddha, but they have a similar sense of heavy, rounded mass. The saṅghāṭīs of each are worn in the open mode with shoulder flap (Fig. 4.15-d). The drapery patterns are more emphasized than in the left Buddha of Group 9, and the hems show more interest in a variety of motifs: the wavy hem edge on the central Buddha and the angular, zigzag edge

<sup>118</sup> This particular relation was discussed years ago in my article M. Rhie, "Some Aspects of the Relation of 5<sup>th</sup>-Century Chinese Buddha Images with Sculpture from N. India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia", *East and West*, Vol. 26, Nos. 3-4 (Sept.-Dec., 1976), p. 451 and figs. 22 and 23.

<sup>119</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 301-302, where the Style V images were "attributed to ca. first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century" and related to both the Shotorak and Group 9 Buddha (which was there cited as ca. 430's) and used as one reason (among others) to date the Rawak Style V images, which are smaller images placed in between the larger Style IV images and are hence involved with dating that unusual stylistic group as well.

on the right Buddha (facing). The right Buddha incorporates the alternating deep and shallow pattern of incised lines on the left upper arm (a feature used in the Group 6 Amitāyus and the Group 7 Buddha). However, it is not a major motif, but one among a variety of motifs, the newest one of which is probably the jagged saw-tooth hem of the saṅghāṭī hem over the left forearm. A hint of this manner is seen in the Śākyamuni painting of Group 6 (Figs. 7.1, 7.8) of 424, but is clearer in the Nelson-Atkins Museum standing bronze Buddha in Fig. 4.10 (discussed in Vol. II as dating “before 430”). The open, wavy hem of the saṅghāṭī hanging over the left shoulder and arm of the central Buddha (Fig. 7.25a and b) is close to the depiction in the Group 7 Buddha in Fig. 7.16c.

Both of the two right Buddhas have several new elements: a rather stiff, wide, creased border of the saṅghāṭī and inner robe as they cross the chest, and a tendency for thick folded pleats of the undergarment hems near the ankles, more marked in the right Buddha. Certainly the bold and somewhat scattered effects of the linear schemes in these Buddhas are different from the more delicate styles of the Group 22 standing Buddha and are coarser than the more coherent scheme of the Group 7 standing Buddha. The somewhat massive form can relate to the Contemplative Bodhisattva in the Wei Wen-lang stele dated 424 (Fig. 5.34c). The overall coarse and rather heavy quality of the robes as well as child-like round faces and rather slender bodies are remarkably similar to the style of the clay sculptures of Sanctuary “B” at Toqquz-Sarai in Tumshuk on the Northern Silk Road. These Sanctuary “B” sculptures were studied in Vol. II and dated there independently as ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> to first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>120</sup> Though the two Buddhas of Group 9 are somewhat difficult to date precisely, they appear to be in the 420’s, possibly ca. 425.

The mandorlas of the center and proper right Buddhas are important in considering the dating of this group (Fig. 7.22). They are skillful variations, mainly in green, white and grey, of a similar style using narrow wavy flames, white pearl rims and several new motifs. The pearl rims in each show a new element: a small circle in the center of each white pearl, perhaps indicative of a highlight. It is an elaboration not seen on any of the pearl motifs of the mandorlas studied so far in Cave 169 except the limited usage seen in Fig. 7.20c. Further, the mandorla of the central Buddha has a remarkably beautiful rinceau of a honeysuckle vine pattern with black outline (Fig. 7.25b). This is more elaborate and hence probably more developed than the vine rinceau band in the mandorla of the Group 6 Amitāyus dated 424 (Fig. 6.11a). In the mandorla of the proper right Buddha there is a narrow band of delicate white twisted rope designs (also seen in Group 7) and a new motif: a band of jewels, each set within an upper and lower border of two rows of tiny white pearls (Fig. 7.25a). A boldly portrayed white and grey jagged flame pattern creates the outer top band of the right Buddha’s mandorla, which, though somewhat broken, is clearly originally in a peak shape. The white flame pattern is simple and bold, outlined in grey against a black ground. Small spirals in these jagged white flames are a motif (interestingly reminding one of the spirals in late Warring States inlaid ritual bronze vessels) possibly developed from patterns such as those in the head halo of the Group 23 stone Buddha (Figs. 5.20, 5.21) and in the outer rim of the mandorla of the Group 22 Buddha (Fig. 5.45). However, the degree of bold confidence in the Group 9 mandorla suggests the evolution of this pattern to be nearly a standard form.

Both the center and right Buddha have an open lotus pattern in the center of the head halo that is painted in the same bold style as seen in the paintings of Groups 11 and 12, with which this group of sculptures seems to have a close relation. Between the tops of the mandorlas of the left and center Buddha appears the malachite green lotus pedestal of the small Group 6 standing Śākyamuni painting donated by

<sup>120</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 523-529; figs. 3.33-3.34e, 3.34h-3.36b.

Ch'i-fu ? Lo-shih 乞佛口羅使 of Group 6 (Figs. 7.22 and 7.25b, upper left corner). Between the mandorlas of the center and the right (facing) Buddhas is painted a lovely black and white lotus pedestal (?) design of much bolder character (Figs. 7.22 and 7.25b, upper right corner); perhaps it had been a part of the ruined (left) Buddha of Group 7. As will be discussed below in the Group 11 wall paintings, probably the two donors on the top level of Group 11 are the donors of these Group 9 images (Figs. 7.26, 7.29, 7.30).

### B. Group 10: Wall Paintings (far left)

Below the standing Buddha at the far right (facing) of the Group 9 sculptures is the remains of a wall surface containing paintings in an area about 77 cm high and 83 cm wide (Fig. 7.26). Two layers of paintings are exposed here; the upper layer is later than the layer underneath, which is among the earliest wall paintings in the cave.

#### 1. Under Layer

Only a portion of the under layer can be seen in Fig. 7.27a (lower right) and Fig. 7.27b (left side). The exposed part in Fig. 7.27a shows the left knee portion of a Buddha (possibly dhyānāsana) seated on a lotus seat. From Fig. 7.27b it can be seen to have an outer band of the mandorla with some loosely drawn, large, simple flames of the hook type drawn in black ink on the overall white ground. A colophon nearby at the right (facing) has the characters Shih-chia-wen fo 釋迦文佛. These characters for Śākyamuni are used in early text translations, such as Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Saddharmapundarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*), the *Cheng fa-hua ching* (T 263), translated in 286 (see Chapter 4). After Kumārajīva used the characters Shih-chia-mou-ni fo 釋迦牟尼佛 in his translations, such the *Miao fa lien hua ching* (his translation of the *Lotus Sutra*) in 406 A.D., his terminology was commonly used, including in the other colophons for Śākyamuni in this cave, such in the inscription of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in Group 24 on the East Wall of ca. 400 (or a little later) and in Group 11 as well as in Group 6 dated 424. So the usage of "Shih-chia-wen fo", being an older way of writing Śākyamuni's name, could be one indication of the early date (ca. 400 or a little earlier) of the under layer of the Group 10 paintings.

A little lower down on the right (facing) is the remains of a seated Bodhisattva in dhyānāsana also on a lotus seat (Fig. 7.27b). The accompanying colophon is reported as reading Wen-shu-shih-li 文殊師利, which is Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva.<sup>121</sup> These characters are commonly seen for Mañjuśrī, including in the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra (see above, p. 260). The figure has a black robe with a circular cowl, a proportionately large face, and wears simple earrings like the kind seen on the Bodhisattva sculpture of Group 22 (Fig. 5.53). The image has a circular head halo and body halo in white with black lines. The painting style is brusque and not as refined as the paintings of the Group 6. Also, the colors are limited to black, white, and flesh color, without any malachite green. In general, the painting style agrees with that of the Group 24 wall paintings, particularly with the embedded triad of Buddha and two monks (Fig. 5.5).<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Teng (1994), p. 7.

<sup>122</sup> This Group 10 under-layer wall painting is considered to be among the earliest works in this cave by Teng Yü-hsiang, who places only the Group 18 Buddhas and this painting in the group of works prior to the Group 6 niche, which he dates to 420.



## 2. *Upper Layer*

The upper layer of the Group 10 wall painting is also fragmented. It now shows a seated Buddha under a broad canopy with malachite green ruffled edge. The Buddha is labeled in the colophon (near the break with the under layer surface) as Shih-chia mou-ni fo 釋迦牟尼佛. He has his right hand in the abhaya mudrā with his arm extended out to the side, which is an older style for this gesture and not seen in the paintings of Group 11, 12 and 13. His saṅghātī is in the open mode, revealing the long torso. The edges of the inner robe (which has an nicely checkered pattern) and the saṅghātī have malachite green hems and undersides which create a strong border patterning. The face has refined features, but is missing the lower portion. The head and body halos are both round and use the wavy flame edge and white pearls (without centers). Large white flames with heavy black contours and shading fill the inner part of the circular body halo. The head halo has a red outer band and white inner circle. To the Buddha's right is part of a standing image in Bodhisattva's garb with a pearl-edged white crown, long locks of black hair, and a jewel-studded flat choker necklace similar to those on the Bodhisattva sculptures of the Group 6 Amitāyus niche of 424 (Fig. 6.14c). This image is labeled "Wei-mo-chi chih hsiang" 維摩詰之像 (image of Wei-mo-chi). The circular head halo is malachite green in the center with a white outer band. On both this image and the Buddha, the eyes are set close to the eyebrows, which are nearly horizontal. There are two large lotus flowers above the image.

The style of this painting of the upper layer would appear to be later than the Group 6 painting, possibly around the time of the Group 9 sculptures, though it has some conservative features. Perhaps this area was resurfaced at the time the Group 9 sculptures were made and the older layer of wall paintings were covered over and new paintings made. It is a different style from the paintings of Groups 11-13.

### C. *Group 11: Wall Paintings (center left)*

The wall paintings of this group as well as Group 12 are now famous for their iconographic content and their remarkably animated and bold style. They are well preserved representatives of some of the earliest known Chinese Buddhist painting. The color remains vivid and there is much usage of malachite green. Lapis lazuli blue also appears, indicating the use of expensive imported colors. The technique is classical linear drawing with a forceful, free and even black contour as well as interior lines in most cases. There is very little modeling, and when it is used it is just a brusque, wide line of orange coloring. These paintings are individually important and will be discussed one by one below.

The area demarcated as Group 11 (Fig. 7.26) has four horizontal zones of paintings, one above the other.<sup>123</sup> The clay surface for the three lower zones is one unit and slightly covers over the bottom edge of the topmost zone,<sup>124</sup> indicating that the topmost zone is at least a bit earlier and that the clay surface for the three lower zones was prepared afterwards. However, as will become clear below, the likely time of making of all the levels of this group is relatively close together.

<sup>123</sup> Teng (1994), p. 7 divides this group into three zones.

<sup>124</sup> Especially observable where the hems of the pair of male and female donors appear at the left (facing) side. See *Heirinji sekkutsu*, 1986, pl. 36, upper left.



### 1. *Topmost Level*

In the topmost level are two standing Buddhas (H. 37 cm), each on a lotus pedestal (Figs. 7.26, 7.28). To the left (facing) of the two Buddhas are two small donors, one male followed by one female (Figs. 7.29, 7.30). According to Wei Wen-pin, between them there is a black ink inscription “...’s image” (... 之像).<sup>125</sup> They are facing towards the group of three standing clay Buddhas of Group 9 (Fig. 7.22, mid-right side) and so presumably they are related to that group, unless they were part of wall paintings that were destroyed in order to make the sculptures of Group 9. However, the fact that the clay surface on which they are painted matches smoothly with the clay surface on which the mandorla of the Group 9 right (facing) Buddha was painted strongly indicates the probable relation.

The female wears a long garment with the triangular pointed edges and streamers of the garment drifting out behind her in the style known in the female donor portraits of Group 6 of 424 (Fig. 7.13a, b). There is a slight difference in the hem line, which is curved rather than straight as seen in the Group 6 examples. Presumably these two donors are of high class in the society of the Western Ch’in, similar to the donors of the Group 6 niche. The lower hem of the female’s dress is cut off by the clay wall surface used to prepare for the paintings of the next zone below. This would indicate that the topmost level of Group 11 belongs to the time of the Group 9 Buddhas, ca. 425.

The two standing Buddhas are quite interesting (Fig. 7.29, upper center). They have a pronounced sway, even more than the Śākyamuni painting of Group 6 (Fig. 7.8). The linear fold scheme of the two standing Buddhas is very similar to those of the Group 9 Buddhas (Fig. 7.22), that is, broken into various segments. They stand on oval lotus pedestals with swiftly drawn, up-turned petals and have mandorlas with simple, plain bands. There are two lotus buds between them. These two standing Buddhas of Group 11 are also likely to have been part of the work done at the same time as Group 9 along with the male and female pair of donors (probably husband and wife) between these two standing Buddhas and the Group 9 sculptures. Without any inscriptions, it is difficult to identify these two standing Buddhas. Perhaps they are part of a set, or a pair, such as Śākyamuni and Maitreya or Śākyamuni and Dīpaṃkara.

Facing, on the right side of the two painted standing Buddhas, there seem to be at least three other donor figures. Only one is clearly visible—a standing female; the other two are quite faint. The standing female, whose painting crosses the line between two surfaces of clay, faces in the opposite direction (i.e., towards the east) towards a row of dhyānāsana Buddhas, which, as discussed below in Group 12, would appear to be a row of seven Buddhas, now greatly faded in the western area near the donors, but visible at the eastern end of the row at the top of Group 12 (Figs. 7.26, 7.28).

### 2. *Second Level from the Top*

In this level (an area about 98 x 54 cm) there is a prominent triad with a dhyānāsana Buddha accompanied by two large standing Bodhisattvas and a group of four donors at the left (facing) with one large apsaras figure above (Figs. 7.26, 7.28, 7.31a). This zone, like the others, has a white ground, but it seems to have been renewed at some point, thus covering over some of the paintings and writing underneath (Fig. 7.31a).

The seated Buddha (H. 28 cm) is an excellent representation of one kind of Buddha style seen in a number of paintings in Cave 169 (Fig. 7.31b). It is a non-heroic, fairly abstract and gentle, almost

<sup>125</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 7.

childlike figure with large head, sloping shoulders, and a simply defined body with little individualistic definition of the parts or of any muscular form. The robe laps over the arms and legs in a fluid, circular way and the whole linear configuration is simple, symmetrical and unified. Like the small bronze altar images of the 4<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup> century, this type may have evolved from smaller representations known even in the art of Mathurā and Gandhāra of the Kushana period, and as seen in Central Asia in many of the small “vesica” Buddhas from Rawak. This form is also stylistically associable with the thousand Buddha representations in early Chinese Buddhist art. It is distinct from the larger, more monumental figures which are more complex and show more body structure.

The mandorla is composed of wide, plain colored bands and the head halo portion is contained within the larger mandorla, which has a clear pointed peak. Earlier paintings in Cave 169, such as the East Wall thousand Buddha painting (Figs. 5.4a, b, 5.5) of ca. 400 and the Group 6 paintings of 424 (Figs. 7.3a, b), did not use the peaked mandorla, which seems to appear in Cave 169 around the time of the Group 9 sculptures, discussed above as probably dating ca. 425. The canopy, a standard feature in most Buddha paintings in this cave, does not have the ruffled edge of the Group 6 Śākyamuni or Group 10 seated Buddha (Figs. 7.2, 7.27a ) but rather has a pronounced scalloped edge, very similar to the kind used in the left (north) triad of the East Wall thousand Buddha panel (Fig. 5.5). The dome-like top of the Group 11 canopy has alternating lapis lazuli blue, black and white stripes and is crowned by a jewel. The usage of lapis lazuli blue is a new feature in the paintings of Cave 169 and probably suggests a period of some prosperity and active trade in the Western Ch’in territory when this kind of expensive material was available.

The pedestal is unusual; it is not seen in other earlier examples in Cave 169, but is similar to others in Groups 11 and 12. It is comprised of an open white lotus placed on a tilted rectangular malachite green plane on which are drawn black line spirals, apparently simulating a water design (Fig. 7.31b). This water plane in turn rests on four semicircular (lotus petal?) supports which rise from a trapezoidal shape with a wave design drawn over the white ground. This could be a depiction of Mt. Sumeru, or possibly the depiction of a table or large container holding offerings. The wave pattern used in this pedestal can perhaps be equated with the wave patterns used as design elements in most gilt bronzes of the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century, notably on the top surface and side borders of the four-footed stand, such as seen in the bronze altar from Ching-ch’uan of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century studied in Chapter 2 (Figs. 2.1a, 2.24a, b).

The two large attendant Bodhisattva images (H. 40 cm) stand to the height of the seated Buddha (Figs. 7.30a, 7.30b). They are labeled by colophon writing: the right attendant Bodhisattva is labeled Hua-yen p’u sa 華嚴菩薩 and the left attendant Bodhisattva is labeled Yüeh-kuang p’u-sa 月光菩薩 (Chandraprabha Bodhisattva). These names could be related to the *Hua-yen ching* (translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra in early 420 and the collation/revision completed early in 422). They each have three knots of hair on the top of their head, a white band around the base of the group of knots, stud-like earrings (as seen on Group 22 Bodhisattva and Group 10 lower layer Mañjuśrī), a very large, loose, malachite green shawl worn over the chest, a brown dhoti whose lower part shows under the green shawl, and large feet standing rakishly over the sides of the lotus pod. The three knots of hair appear in some of the figures of the Eastern Chin period mirrors from the south (Fig. 3.23). The stance in particular is characteristic of paintings at Kuntura GK Cave 20 (Figs. 7.32a, b), which, as discussed in Vol. II, compare very closely with the style of the Groups 11 and 12 wall paintings.<sup>126</sup> These two

<sup>126</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 708-714.

attendants are posed in an active posture, bending at the waist and raising up their hands, which grasp the stem of a lotus flower (somewhat smeared out by the white over paint). They stand on a vigorously portrayed lotus pedestal with the seed holes depicted. The lotus petals are shaded in two colors in a brusque style similar to the depictions in Kumtura Cave GK 20 in Figs. 7.32a, b, and is also common to other wall paintings in Kansu. The main color used in the triad is green; other colors include an orange flesh color, brown, and white, with occasional areas of lapis lazuli. No modeling with white is used on the faces to highlight the features.

This triad is in some respects similar to the two triads embedded in the thousand Buddha painting of the East Wall (Fig. 5.5, 5.8a), though a close comparison reveals differences indicative of clear stylistic development. Perhaps the most striking difference is the increased size, definition and movement in the two attendant figures of the Group 11 triad compared with the East Wall triads. Further, there is the different kind of pedestal and the peaked mandorla in the Group 11 Buddha. Overall, the Group 11 painting has much bolder style of brushwork and an increased range of pigments with generous quantities of malachite green and some lapis lazuli blue. The triad form as a type is quite similar in both, but the execution and elaboration of form and details show developments in the Group 11 painting. According to the dating offered in this study, there seems to be a span of around 20-25 years between the two (ca. 400 or a little later for the East Wall triad and ca. 425 for the Group 11 triad).

To the left (facing) stands a monk (H. 23 cm) with stippled beard dressed in a black outer robe covering one shoulder, a white under garment and short black boots (Fig. 7.31a). He appears to be the lead donor together with three female donors behind him. His face and beard are not depicted in the same way as those of the monk donors of the Group 6 paintings, which use the form known in the Kizil wall paintings. He makes an offering with an incense burner in his left hand and a small bowl in his right hand. This monk image has been painted over a female figure, probably a donor, that is barely hidden under a layer of white gesso. This may be the result of making a change or correction in an initial depiction. Behind the monk are two standing ladies (H. 33 and 27 cm), the lead one being quite a bit larger than the monk. Though they are both dressed in a long skirt with loose sleeves, the larger one, who seems the most important, has a shawl and her dress is more varied. However, her costume is not as high class in the Han Chinese style as the main female donors in the Group 6 paintings and the one in the topmost level of Group 11 (Figs. 7.13b and 7.30). Behind them is a girl (H. 19 cm) in less fancy dress than the other two larger women. She wears a black bodice and has an orange-red and grey striped skirt and has her hair in two knots on top of her head. She appears dressed like an ethnic figure rather than a Han Chinese. There are three colophons for this group, but they are blank or not decipherable.

Above the row of donors hovers the large figure of a flying celestial offering a long flower garland. The prominent figure has a long limbs and exposed torso that has muscular definition. A long, narrow shoulder scarf circles away from the upper body and behind the head halo, unlike the scarf on the Maitreya painting of Group 6 of 424 (Fig. 7.9a, b), but similar to other examples in Groups 12-13 and in the earlier East Wall triad in the thousand Buddha panel (Fig. 5.8b). As suggested above in the discussion of Group 6, this could indicate that the Group 6 style is a different stylistic lineage, possibly reflecting styles from the South. The East Wall painting and those of Group 11, on the other hand, probably represent a more local artistic tradition that is related to the tomb paintings known from Kansu province in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Group 10 outer layer painted Bodhisattva also depicts the scarf in front of the head halo (Fig. 7.27a), perhaps following the Group 6 mode. The long ends of the Group 11 celestial's scarf follow the contours of the body and the lower side has a long wavy edge portrayed

in a distinctly sketchy manner. The scarves are similarly portrayed in other celestials in Group 12. The long, straight sweep of the scarf along the contours of the body is akin to the early representation of celestials in the small bronze altar, such as seen in the Phase II (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century) mandorla of the Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku example of ca. 375 (Fig. 2.7). There is a black ink inscription along the outer side of the proper left attendant Bodhisattva:

Heng chou person Hsiung-nu river official is making an offering before returning home for protection humbly to return (Heng chou jen ho-hsi ho-ts'ao kung-yang fo tsao te chia pao-yu fu hua huan 恒州人紇奚河曹供養佛早得家保佑伏華還).

This could be a later person's writing.

### 3. *Third Level from the Top*

The third zone (approximately 97 x 47 cm) from the top presents a scene of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī Bodhisattvas flanking an image of a seated Buddha (Figs. 7.26, 7.33). The Buddha in the center is identified by black ink inscription in the colophon above the Buddha's left shoulder as Wu-liang-shou fo 無量壽佛 (Buddha Amitāyus). The Amitāyus Buddha is shown in the abhayā mudrā (possibly meant as a teaching mudrā), which is different from the Amitāyus sculpture of Group 6 with dhyanā mudrā. He is painted with a fair amount of color, notably lapis lazuli blue on all the borders of the saṅghāṭī and the outer rim of the head halo. The borders of the robe are particularly emphatic, more so than seen in the Group 10 image in Fig. 7.27a. The robe is a reddish-brown and the body may have had some color that is now worn out. It is the type of figure of heroic build and open saṅghāṭī as seen in the seated Buddha of the large panel at the right (Group 12) in Fig. 7.35, and contrasts with the childlike type as is also seen in the Buddha of the Group 11 second level above. This clearly confirms the co-existence of at least two different types of Buddha depictions at this time. He sits on a white lotus pedestal that is placed on the panel with a water motif. The mandorla has a simple semi-circular shape at the top of the mandorla (a simpler version of that seen in the Group 6 Amitāyus). Above is a scalloped edged, dome-shaped canopy with three flaming jewels as decoration. These resemble the acroteria seen in paintings from the South and in some wall paintings in Koguryō in North Korea from the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century and later.<sup>127</sup>

At the Buddha's left is the scene of a figure reclining in a bed under a green cover and with a circular head halo and canopy above. A standing figure with circular head halo, hair partly bound up and dressed in white appears at his feet. Looped curtains hang from the top of the window-like panel, which probably represents Vimalakīrti's sick bed. Between the two figures are two adjoining colophons with the writing Wei-mo-chieh chih hsiang 維摩詰之像 (image of Vimalakīrti) and Chi che chih hsiang 侍者之像 (image of the attendant). Vimalakīrti is depicted like a Bodhisattva and not like the old, bearded gentleman of later traditions, or even as depicted at Yün-kang.<sup>128</sup> Presumably it is also different from Ku K'ai-chih's famous representation, if we take the Lung-men Cave 3 representation as the possible tradition of Ku K'ai-chih.<sup>129</sup> This would be the earliest surviving painting of Vimalakīrti now known.

The scene at the left (facing) shows a figure in the pose of royal ease with right leg pendant seated on a rectangular five-layered pedestal with constricted center (Fig. 7.33). The seated figure, who holds

<sup>127</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 1.54c, 1.66f, 1.71a.

<sup>128</sup> See the excellent study by Emma Bunker, "Early Chinese Representations of Vimalakīrti," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXX, 1968, pp. 28-52.

<sup>129</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 1.49b, 1.50b, c.

his right hand up towards his right shoulder, a gesture which is known in Gandhāran sculpture of this time, and his left hand in his lap, is presumably Mañjuśrī, but the colophons are not clear in this section. His mandorla is topped by a canopy which makes a pointed shape. Above the canopy is an arch of five flowers probably representing a jewel tree (often called a bodhi tree motif). He is attended by two Bodhisattvas, each with a round head halo and standing on a lotus pedestal. The Bodhisattva at his left has a pleated green undergarment and a large lapis lazuli blue shawl covering most of the body and worn over his left shoulder. The right Bodhisattva has an orange-yellow shawl across his body, a brown dhoti and shoulder scarf.

The right and left panels undoubtedly represent the main figures of the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa, translated by Chih-ch'ien in 223-228 (*Wei-mo-chieh ching*) and later by Kumārajīva in 406 (*Wei-mo-chieh so shuo ching*). It is well-known to have been extremely popular in the South in the 4<sup>th</sup> century under the Eastern Chin. As noted by Teng Yü-hsiang and others, this Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī scene is the oldest known definite depiction of this theme still surviving. The relation of the presence of Amitāyus to the others is not clear—it would almost seem that Akṣobhya Buddha would be more appropriate here in conjunction with the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*. However, as noted above on page 206, Amitābha/Amitāyus is mentioned in Chapter 7 among the list of Buddhas who visit the house of Vimalakīrti as the 7<sup>th</sup> wonderful thing. This may account for his representation here.<sup>130</sup>

#### 4. Lowest Level

The lowest level (approximately 50-70 cm x 110 cm) is quite damaged, but faint remains of a dhyānāsana Buddha with predominantly red halo appears at the far left (facing) (Figs. 7.26, 7.33). On the east side of the Buddha's mandorla are the faint remains of a colophon with the remains of one character: “□彌....” (? mi....), possibly A-mi-t'o (Amitābha). At the far right, under the Vimalakīrti panel, is a painting (70 x 46 cm) of the two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna (Figs. 7.26, 7.28, 7.34 and 5.15a, b) identified by the large colophon between them, reading from right to left: 釋迦牟尼佛 多寶佛 說法時: “Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna at the time of discussing the Dharma” (Shih-chia-mou-ni-fo Ta-pao-fo chieh fa shih). They are both seated with legs pendant inside the representation of a stupa with outer wide band of green, white and brown flame-like patterns and topped a yaṣṭi (the axis mundi pole) that holds three sets of umbrellas (chattras) in a form that resembles the “W” form. This form was discussed earlier in Chapter 5 where a comparison was made between the representation of this same scene in the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting of ca. 400 and the Group 11 representation.<sup>131</sup> The central umbrella has seven layers and the two outer ones each have five. The shape of the chattras is somewhat different from the depiction in the Group 24 Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna panel embedded in the East Wall 1,000 Buddha painting (Fig. 5.14a, b) and in the stupas of Group 23 (Fig. 5.23-i), though all three examples use the ancient Indian auspicious “W” form.

The coloring and posture of the two Buddhas, each with mandorla and canopy, are quite different from the depiction of Group 24 on the East Wall. It is very interesting to see the usage of the pendant legged sitting posture for these two Buddhas, possibly repeating the same posture as those in the

<sup>130</sup> Under the Amitāyus and Mañjuśrī there are some drawings and inscriptions on white ground:

進香趙口趙繼宗 趙梅 楊口 趙寧 趙芳 趙真一心進香  
河州安鄉縣嘉靖三十三年四月十八日具心

The Chia-ching 33<sup>rd</sup> year is 1554 in the Ming Dynasty.

<sup>131</sup> See Chapter 5, note 13.



Group 24 panel. Both use Kumārajīva's term "Shih-chia-mou-ni" for Śākayamuni. There is some indication of more figures below, but they are too faint to be distinguished. Wei Wen-pin reports the fragments of two ink inscriptions in this area: Bhikṣu Tao ..., Bhikṣu ... 's image (比丘道..., 比丘...之像)".<sup>132</sup> These inscriptions would indicate that the possible donors of this panel were bhikṣus, one of whom had the name beginning with Tao.<sup>133</sup>

#### D. Group 12: Wall Paintings (center right)

Group 12 is one of the most important paintings in Cave 169. It has a painted surface about 2.44 m [8 ft.] high and 3 m [9.8 ft.] wide and appears to be one large, cohesive unit (Figs. 7.26, 7.35). It seems to have the same original clay surfacing as Groups 11 and 13.<sup>134</sup> At its center is a large seated Buddha (H. 86 cm [33.8 in.]) which is probably one of the finest paintings of its kind surviving among early Chinese Buddhist art, and it survives in good condition (Fig. 7.36). Though Group 11 presented a mixture of iconographies, including several from obviously different textual sources, both Group 12 and 13 appear to be focusing on one major theme and that of Group 12 has far-reaching consequences.

##### 1. Main Seated Buddha

Though generally similar stylistically to the "Amitāyus" adjacent in Group 11, the large Buddha painting has some interesting different characteristics. The body has rather massive proportions. The generous sized limbs and large feet do, however, contrast with the head, which is quite small and imparts a youthful, innocent expression. The facial features, somewhat tiny, are nevertheless particularly appealing. The nose is long and delicate with curling nostrils. The ears have a double arc contour at the top, are fairly long and have inner drawing of the shape of the lower lobe, as seen in the ears of the three eastern sculptures of Group 23 (Figs. 5.33, 5.36). The right hand, which is bent backwards, is portrayed with elegantly long fingers held close together without bending. They make a gracefully curved shape, presumably representing the abhayā mudrā. This hand depiction is a distinctive style which appears elsewhere, such as in Cave 272 at Tun-huang. Here, as with the "Amitāyus" of Group 11, it is positioned in front of the body instead of out to the side as seen in the seated Buddha of the preaching triad of the Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddha panel of ca. 400 (Fig. 5.8a, b).

The saṅghāṭī is treated in much the same manner as those in the "Amitāyus" of Group 11. Both also have some resemblance to the garment depiction in the Buddha of the preaching triad of the Group 24 thousand Buddha panel (Figs. 5.8a, b). That is, using different colors for the borders, which make a band-like frame around much of the image, creating emphatic sweeping curves of the hems, including an elliptical shape around the left arm. But there are several new elements in this Group 12 Buddha. In the exposed undergarment on the chest, a dark line alternates with a light line, giving much the same effect as the alternating thick and thin incised lines as seen on the outer robe of the Amitāyus statue of Group 6 dated 424 A.D. (Fig. 6.8b). Further, the parallel U-shaped fold lines on the legs form a few

<sup>132</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 8.

<sup>133</sup> Another, later, black ink inscription appears below the standing proper left attendant of the Mañjuśrī group:  
清信弟子邢?春?感一心供養 / 儀鳳四年□□五日..... (I-feng 4<sup>th</sup> year is 679 A.D. in the T'ang Dynasty).  
... 三月清信士□□供養 ...  
... 八年歲在 ... / ... / ... 續 ... / ...

<sup>134</sup> Some of the white background put on the second level of Group 11 seems to have impinged on the paintings of Group 12 at the edges.



semi-circular patterns. This kind of patterning can be seen in other images around the 530's.<sup>135</sup> The mandorla is round with a round head halo that has plain green and brown bands. The bands of the body halo portion have flame patterns of simple, bold, hook-like forms, also similar to those known from Khotan (Fig. 7.21b). Narrow, individually wavy spits of flame behind the shoulders are different from other depictions in this cave. Above the mandorla is a seven-flower jewel tree motif, but no canopy. The flowers are green and brown against a black ground and they have a little shading in lighter color. They seem to sparkle with the green petals surrounding them like rays.

The lotus pedestal has a single row of large petals that have a double petal shape (two sepals?) drawn above the larger underlying petal. These petals are solid colors, alternating between brown and the clay color. This lotus seat is placed on top of a circular base with spiral water motif, in this case like a round pond rather than on a square or rectangular base. Below is a roaring lion drawn in side view with black ink at the left (facing), the remains of what appears to be a dish of offerings, and a narrow-necked vase with leaves or flowers. At the far right are two standing figures who appear to be monks, each with a colophon (now blank). The one in front has his arms lifted and appears to be holding something. They are possibly donors of this painting.

## 2. *Buddha's Attendants and Kneeling Brahmin-like Figure*

Two large standing Bodhisattvas (or devas) attend this Buddha (Fig. 7.35). They wear quite fancy white crowns. The right attendant, wearing a malachite green robe, holds the hands up in a worshipping gesture (*añjali mudrā*) (Fig. 7.37). The left attendant (H. 97 cm) has a green shawl worn over brown robes and stands on an open lotus. The right arm is behind the Buddha's mandorla, but the left hand is raised to waist level and holds what appears to be the edge of his robe, a lotus bud or a jewel. Both have round head halos and both use white modeling highlights, like the Buddha, to emphasize the features of the face, such as the nose, eyebrows and chin. This kind of modeling was used in the figures of the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting, but in this Group 12 painting it is bolder and more pronounced. This is a feature of contemporary (and earlier) wall paintings of Kumtura and Kizil in the Kucha region.

In front of the right attendant, partly covering the figure, is a male figure (H. 45 cm [17.7 in.]) kneeling on his right knee on a lotus pedestal and holding up his hands in worshipful respect to the Buddha (Figs. 7.35, 7.38a). He appears to be a foreigner, like an Indian yogi, Brahmin, or ascetic with his hair loosely bound up on his head. He has a long, twirled mustache and the features of his face are presented differently from other figures with bony features, pointed nose and chin. The profile is quite similar to that on a so-called "Heraus" (for "Heraios") coin from the Bactrian region in Fig. 7.38b. Such coins may have served as a model for representing a typical "foreign" figure in Chinese art of this time. The figure in the Group 12 painting has a round head halo with simple, jagged, white flames around the rim. He is clearly a figure of some importance in this scene and considered saintly by virtue of the halo.

The Group 12 painting possibly depicts the Great Miracles at Śrāvastī. Not only are the flame and water motifs (the "twin miracles") suggested, but also present are the trees (possibly a reference to the mango tree) and a kneeling figure whose features suggest it may be one of the six defeated heretics of the occasion. However, it is also possible that the kneeling figure represents Brahmā paying homage to

<sup>135</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.95, 2.97a, b.

Śākyamuni, though in that case it would be likely to also see a figure of Indra. The presence of the lion would strongly indicate that the Buddha was Śākyamuni.

Prototypes of the triad with seated teaching Buddha and two main standing attendant Bodhisattvas are known in Gandhāran sculpture, such as the example in Fig. 6.18, which is considered by some to be a representation of the Great Miracles at Śrāvastī, though recent scholarship is casting some doubt on this identification. The Group 12 painting certainly has some features that relate to those triads, which are generally thought to be Śākyamuni Buddha seated on a lotus throne with a jewel tree overhead, robe with right shoulder bare and accompanied by the standing Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya (or Siddhartha in some cases). We will return to further consideration of the identity below.

Tucked in behind the right attendant is a small standing Buddha in white with white halo with wavy black filling lines and white lotus pedestal on top of the green spiral water motif (Fig. 7.37). Possibly he is a transformation Buddha. Such filling lines were observed earlier in the Group 11 paintings where it was also noted that some images of the 420's also used this kind of design. It seems to be a design associated with a particular painting tradition which seems to be more local to the Kansu area.

Above the small white Buddha are two flying apsaras figures bearing plates of offerings in their raised right hands and holding a lotus flower in their left hands. The lower one has a brown dhoti and the one above has a green dhoti. Both have circular head halos and are similar to the larger apsaras of Group 11 (Fig. 7.29). There are colophons here and there; they are not reported by Wei Wen-pin, and are perhaps unreadable or are later writing.<sup>136</sup>

### 3. Above the Buddha Group: Buddhas, Donors and a Five Buddha Painting

Above the two apsaras figures are two standing monks facing a row of dhyānāsana Buddhas on lotus pedestals (Figs. 7.26, 7.28, 7.39). These two monks have colophons which read:

- 1) at the right (facing) H. 20 cm: 道聰之像 (Tao-ts'ung chih hsiang, "image of Tao-ts'ung")
- 2) at the left H. 18 cm: 法顯供養之像 (Fa-hsien kung-yang chih hsiang, "image of Fa-hsien worshipping")

The monk with the Fa-hsien label is portrayed with features resembling the foreign looking person below worshipping the Buddha. He contrasts to Tao-ts'ung, who seems like a young Chinese monk. The characters for the name Fa-hsien are the same as those of the famous Fa-hsien who traveled to India ca. 400-415. Although it could refer to another monk of the same name, it is more likely to refer to the famous Fa-hsien who traveled through the Western Ch'in territory on his way to India and stayed in Western Ch'in for the three months of the rain retreat in the first year of his journey, which started in Ch'ang-an in 399 or 400. The colophon could refer to Fa-hsien worshipping the Buddha, perhaps during his stay in this area, or even with regard to his travels to India. The style of this painting does not match the time of 400 when Fa-hsien was actually in Western Ch'in territory, but it is possible that this is a portrayal at a later time of that event. Both are shown in robes covering one shoulder and wearing black shoes. The right foot of Fa-hsien has been repainted after the addition of the white ground on the Group 11 segment, which must have covered the existing original foot of the Group 12 painting. This indicates that the repainting of the Group 11 painting was done later than Group 12.

<sup>136</sup> The published inscriptions are in Wei Wen-pin (1994), pp. 9-10.

These two monks stand next to and face a row of dhyānāsana Buddhas, which can be counted as a group of seven Buddhas (H. between 18 to 25 cm). If so, then they are likely to be the seven Buddhas (Śākyamuni and his six predecessors), a theme that is current in the stone stupas of Liang chou in the 420s and 430s and also in Gandhāran art. There are some colophons with some of these Buddhas, but only three have inscriptions, and they may have been added later by people visiting the site.<sup>137</sup> The seven Buddhas are lined up from left to right (facing) wearing green, brown, white, brown, brown, white and brown robes. Each sits on a lotus pedestal that is two-toned (white and brown). Each has a mandorla with round head halo, but no canopy. It would seem that there was another row of seven dhyānāsana Buddhas above (Fig. 7.26), but most are unclear. This upper row is best preserved at the far right (facing), where there is one with a green robe. At the end (or beginning) of this upper row at the far left (facing) are some standing figures. They appear above the images of Fa-hsien and Tao-hui and are probably donors. A standing female is still relatively clear, but there seems to be one or two others in front of her and just above the two monks Fa-hsien and Tao-hui. The set of seven Buddhas is well-known in China of this time in the Liang chou stone stupas (where there are usually 8 figures, the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva), such as seen in one of the best preserved examples, that of the stupa of Kao Shan-mu dated 428 from Chiu-ch'üan in Fig. 7.42. It is also possible that these small dhyānāsana Buddhas represent the transformed Buddhas in Śākyamuni's display of multiple bodies during the Miracles of Śrāvastī. Other scholars have not yet commented on the possible identify and arrangement of these Buddhas above the large main Group 12 Buddha image.

There is another group of images at the upper right (facing) just above the tree canopy and main Buddha's left attendant (Figs. 7.26, 7.40, 7.41). This group, even though it is contiguous to the rows of seven Buddhas just discussed, appears to be a separate group from the row (or rows) of seven Buddhas. This group consists of two standing Buddhas, two seated Buddhas and one cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Fig. 7.41). This grouping also has not been noticed or identified by other scholars, though Wei Wen-pi notes that the cross-ankled Bodhisattva is Maitreya. This group, which has such distinctly individualized images, appears to me to be a separate and special group that presents a set of five: 2 seated Buddhas, 2 standing Buddhas and one cross-ankled Maitreya, who is undoubtedly Maitreya Bodhisattva as known in many examples of the stone stupas of Tun-huang, Chiu-ch'üan and Ku-ts'ang (Wu-wei) of this time. Because Maitreya Bodhisattva is part of this group, it must be a group of either the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva or the Five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (the first five Buddhas of this eon, the Bhadrakalpa, which include Maitreya). Since the group does not appear to have seven, but does work with five, it is most likely the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, that is, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya (identifiable as Maitreya Bodhisattva). If Maitreya is chronologically the last in this series, then the issue of identification of the other Buddhas depends on the order of reading. Since the order of circumambulation is clockwise, and the order of identity in the Shih-t'a (stone stupas) of Liang chou in the layout of the seven Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva is clockwise, that is the most likely order to assume. Working clockwise from Maitreya, the images would then be identified as follows:

<sup>137</sup> They are not listed by Wei Wen-pin, but can be read from the photo as 道貴供養佛時 ("at the time of Tao-kuei worshipping the Buddha"). Rather than the name of a Buddha, which would be natural for the colophon, it seems most likely to refer to a later by a visitor to the site. The same seems to be the case with the other, longer inscription on another of these colophons.

- 1) The first standing Buddha (H. 20 cm) is in the *abhayā mudrā* wearing a white robe covering both shoulders. His mandorla is also white and it is peaked. He stands with a slight *tribhaṅga* on a green and white lotus pedestal that has a simplified version of the water motif underneath. He would be Krakucchanda, the first Buddha of this eon.
- 2) Above, the second and taller standing Buddha (H. 27 cm) is also with *abhayā mudrā*. His *saṅghāṭī* is worn in the full sling mode. His mandorla, which does not have a peak, has green, brown and white bands. The Buddha, who is the largest of this group of five, stands frontally on a brown lotus without any water motif. He would be Kanakamuni.
- 3) The third Buddha is seated *dhyānāsana* on a green lotus pedestal with a circular green spiral water motif below. His mandorla has some green and white in the head halo, but the remainder is shades of brown and buff clay color. He would be Kāśyapa.
- 4) Below, the fourth Buddha is also seated *dhyānāsana*, but he sits on a single lotus pedestal without the water motif. His head halo is mostly green and the body halo is shades of clay color. He would be Śākyamuni.
- 5) The fifth image (at the bottom of the group) is the cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva (H. 20 cm) in the *dharmachakra* (teaching) *mudrā*. This is the first image in the *dharmachakra mudrā* among the remaining paintings and sculptures of Cave 169. The *dharmachakra mudrā* for the cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva is known from other examples of the late 420's-430's<sup>138</sup> and it is well known in the Liang chou stone stupas of the 420's and 430's as well as in the stone sculpture of Gandhāra.<sup>139</sup> These examples all present the *dharmachakra mudrā* with the right hand covering (i.e., lapping over) the left hand, as seen in this Group 12 painting. Among the Liang chou stone stupas, none of the earliest ones (pre-428) use the *dharmachakra mudrā* for the Maitreya Bodhisattva. Those from Tun-huang which use the *dharmachakra mudrā* (the Brahmi script stupa and the So A-chün dated 435), present it with the left hand over the right. Those from Chiu-ch'üan that have the *dharmachakra mudrā* all use the right hand over the left: Stupa of Kao dated 428; Stupa of Pai dated 434; black stone fragment of ca. 434 (Fig. 5.65); and Stupa of Ch'eng dated 436. This suggests that 1) Tun-huang has its own regional version of the *mudrā* (left over right hand) in its stone stupas; 2) the Chiu-ch'üan stone stupas consistently use the "standard" version (right over left hand, as seen in Gandhāra and other images from China) from 428 to 436. The dates provided by these examples are one important evidence for dating the Group 12 paintings. It may also be useful in understanding the usage and development of the *dharmachakra mudrā* in Gandhāran sculpture.

The manner of positioning the feet so they angle back inward is somewhat akin to the posture appearing on a relief from Rawak in Fig. 5.37c. This foot posture is different from the more customary position with feet and toes pointing straight down, as seen in Kizil Cave 76 (Fig. 4.45a) and in some of the Liang chou stone stupas, none of which, however, use the exact position as seen in this Group 12 painting. The positioning of the feet for the cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva image undergoes some change of style during the decades of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century and it provides one clue to the dating of these images. The particular style of this Group 12 image is relatively early in the evolution, and seems to match most closely with the style known in early Maitreya Bodhisattva images from Turfan (to be discussed in Vol. IV).

<sup>138</sup> Rhie (2002), Figs. 2.95, 2.97a, b.

<sup>139</sup> Rhie (2002), Fig. 2.97c.

The crown is similar to those of the two attendant Bodhisattvas of the main Buddha. The shoulder scarf passes behind the circular head halo, and it is relatively simply portrayed without any wavy hemlines. The green dhoti is also simple and a few curved lines indicate the folds on both sides of the central sash. What is interestingly different is the usage of the covered stool for the seat rather than a throne. Such a seat is usually used for the Contemplative Bodhisattva images in China.

With respect to the Group 12 set of five, the order of reading the images is a complicated problem; that is, whether to read them linearly (or not) in a clockwise (or counterclockwise) direction, or according to another method of sequencing (such as back and forth or side to side). There is also the question of where to begin the sequencing. The probable answer for the direction of reading and the starting point is given by the stone stupas of Liang chou, where it is possible to know the order in those examples from 1) inscriptions (on the Chi-te stupa dated 426 from Tun-huang); 2) from interpreting the 8 trigrams which can be linked with the 8 images (seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva) according to directional order (the compass points: N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW); and 3) from the starting point of the sutra text that accompanies most of the stone stupas.<sup>140</sup> The starting point in the stone stupas is with the most ancient Buddha and ends with Maitreya Bodhisattva. The direction of reading is clockwise and it is in linear (chronological) sequence. If we apply these criteria to the group of five in the Group 12 wall painting, then the reading is as follows: Krakucchanda (the standing white Buddha), Kanakamuni (the large standing Buddha), Kāśyapa (the seated Buddha with green lotus pedestal), and Śākyamuni (the seated Buddha below Kāśyapa), followed by Maitreya Bodhisattva at the end, as first presented above. In effect this creates a circular presentation, different from the presentation of the other groups of five Buddhas in Cave 169 (Groups 16, 23, and 20). This would appear to be a new development.

If the set of five of the Group 12 paintings is considered in the context of the other two remaining rows (and possibly more that are now lost) of dhyānāsana Buddhas, then there may have been a combination of sets of Buddhas, such as the seven Buddhas or part of the thousand Buddhas, along with the set of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. Be that as it may, it should be emphasized here that the Group 12 five Buddhas offer uniquely important evidence for the study of the evolution of the iconography of the five Buddhas, which turns out to be one of the major developing iconographies in the art of the Mahāyāna movement in Gandhāra in the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century, as discussed in Chapter 8.

With regard to textual sources, as considered earlier in Chapter 5, section I.C., there are references to the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa in the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese by ca. 425, such as the *Lotus Sutra*. In the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* (*Hsien-chieh ching*) translated by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu) in 300 or 291, the names, details of the birth, parents, attendants, name of the highest honorable monk and various disciples, brightness of the śarīra, longevity (long or short), the extent of the bhikṣu assembly, the number of years of the Dharma, number of heavenly beings and people caused to be liberated, and many other details are given for each one of the thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa. The first five are named in this text as follows:<sup>141</sup>

Chü-liu-sun 拘留孫 (Krakucchanda)

Han-mu-ni 含牟尼 (Kanakamuni)

Ch'i-chia-yeh 其迦葉 (Kāśyapa)

<sup>140</sup> These are all explained in detail in the study of these stone stupas presented in Vol. IV of this series.

<sup>141</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 14, (T 435), chüan 7, (section [pin] 21: Arising of the Thousand Buddhas), p. 50.



Shih-chia-wen 釋迦文 (Śākyamuni)

Tz'u-shih-fo 慈氏佛 (Maitreya)

However, as a specific set of “five Buddhas,” it is the *Buddhavaṃsa* (Chronicle of Buddhas), a text from the Pali canon, probably of ca. 2nd century B.C.- 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., that singles out the first five as a specific group.<sup>142</sup> In the *Buddhavaṃsa* the 24 Buddhas prior to Śākyamuni (Gotama) are listed by eons and in separate chapters, all written in verse, with the life of each presented in a standard structure but with varying details. In the last three verses (18, 19 and 20) of the last chapter (Chapter XXVII) in the words of Gautama (Śākyamuni) it says:

verse 18: “In this Buddha-eon there have been three leaders, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana and the leader Kassapa.

verse 19: I at the present time am the Self-Awakened One, and there will be Metteyya. These are the five Buddhas, wise ones, compassionate toward the world.

verse 20: When these kings under Dhamma had pointed out the way for countless crores of others, they waned out with their disciples.”<sup>143</sup>

<sup>142</sup> According to I. B. Horner, the translator of the *Buddhavaṃsa*, “The *Buddhavaṃsa* may be a late comer to the Pali canon. It has the appearance of being the basis for relevant parts of other works, chief of those being the *Jātakaniḍāna*.” Further, she remarks that it represents a “highly developed Buddha lore” and is the “only Pali canonical work to do so on a full scale, though foreshadowed in other texts ...” *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, part III: *Chronicle of Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa)* and *Basket of Conduct (Cariyapitaka)*, trans. by I. B. Horner, London and Boston, The Pali Text Society, 1975 (reprint 2000), pp. x, xii. K. R. Norman comments on the date of the text as follows: “... the whole text is *Śloka* metre, which shows no particularly early features, and in view of the state of development of both the Buddha and Bodhisattva doctrines, it would seem that the *Buddhavaṃsa* is a relatively late addition to the canon.” K. R. Norman, *Pali Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1983, p. 94. B.C. Law states: “The *Buddhavaṃsa*, *Cariyāpiṭaka*, and the *Apadāna* are the three books which found recognition in the list of the *Majjhimabhāṇakas* and were taken no notice of in the *Dīghabhāṇaka* list ...[we] have to presume these three books were compiled and received into the canon after the list was once known to have been complete with 12 books ... these three books presuppose a legend of 24 previous Buddhas which is far in excess of the legend of the six Buddhas contained in other portions of the canon. The *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Cariyāpiṭaka* present a systematic form of the Bodhisattva idea that was shaping itself through the earlier *Jātaka* and the *Apadāna* ... these three books must have existed when the list was drawn up, say, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.” See B.C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, 2 vols., Varanasi, 1974, I, pp. 35 and 42.

<sup>143</sup> Horner (1975 and 2000), p. 97. Regarding verse 18 Horner notes, by quoting Morris, the editor of the text: “Here the *Buddhavaṃsa* rightly ends.” Apparently the 18 verses of this chapter were established by “the recensionists and should be regarded as the Envoi.” *Ibid.*, p. 97, note 8. No comment is made regarding verse 19, but with regard to verse 20 Horner says: “The Pali construction of this verse is unusual and makes a correct rendering difficult to produce. The verse must refer to the previous Buddhas and not to the Buddhas Gotama and Metteyya.” *Ibid.*, p. 97, note 9. Elsewhere Horner suggests that the mention of Maitreya may be a later addition. Concerning “the Buddha Metteyya. He is mentioned only once in the Bv, and that is in the verse following the one where, as Morris says, “Here the Buddha-*Vaṃsa* rightly ends”. However, as he is mentioned, even though in this added (?) portion of the Bv, perhaps I may state my problem: Why, in the Pali tradition, is it apparently never said, or never said in Canon or Commentary, that the Buddha Gotama made the ‘declaration’ of future Buddhahood to the Bodhisattva (named Ajita in some traditions) who will be the next Buddha, Metteyya? On the other hand, the *Mahāvastu*, for example, and other records also, represent him as so doing.” *Ibid.*, pp. xvi-xvii. See also I. B. Horner (trans.), *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning (Madhurattavilāsinī), Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa)* by Buddhaddatta Thera, The Pali Text society, 1978, pp. 424-425.

Despite the difficulties in assessing verses 19 and 20 (verse 18 presents no apparent problem), the fact that they may have been added later is not a major problem since the art that we are considering here belongs to the period of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, probably within the reasonable period of any addition to the text. The reasons why these two verses may have been added is another interesting problem, especially with respect to the complex history of the rise of Mahāyāna and its relation with Hināyāna in greater India during the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries.



The *Bhadrakalpika* is a Mahāyāna text that narrates the lives of all the thousand Buddhas of this current eon, but the *Buddhavaṃsa*, an earlier text of the Pali canon, which does not recognize the thousand Buddhas, only speaks of the first five (and names them) of the Bhadrakalpa in verses 18 and 19 of the last chapter, though, as noted, verse 19 is considered by scholars of Pali literature to possibly be a later addition. The situation is complex because of the interactions between Hinayāna and Mahāyāna in India and Gandhāra, a factor which is not so much in evidence in China, where Buddhism was growing rapidly under the impetus primarily of Mahāyāna texts and ideas. Nevertheless, the translated texts and the Buddhist art of China in this early period shed much light by comparison on the differences between the Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism of this time, and Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 turns out to provide a significant window on this vital and highly complex religious and historical situation, which will engage our attention further in Chapter 8.

In addition, there is another important and somewhat surprising factor that arises in relation to the five Buddhas of the Group 12 wall painting. Another set of five images that is similar to these five of Group 12 in Cave 169 are the five colossal main sculptures of the monumental T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang, Caves 16–20, dating in the early phases of work at Yün-kang from the 460's under the Northern Wei. Both this Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 painting and the five T'an-yao caves similarly have two seated Buddhas, two standing Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva. There appears to be some iconographic resemblance between these two sets of five Buddhas, even though the ordering of the images is not exactly the same. Because the apparent relevancy of this group of five images in the Group 12 wall painting to the study of the iconography of the set of five Buddhas in Gandhāra and for the pre-Yün-kang developments of this concept in China that becomes so powerfully monumentalized in the T'an-yao caves of the 460's and 470's, the initial stages of the complex issues dealing with the iconography of the five T'an-yao caves and their colossal images will also be considered in Chapter 8, following the extensive investigation of the five Buddha iconography in the art of Gandhāra.<sup>144</sup>

#### 4. Summary of the Five Buddha Configurations in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169

Considering the examples of five Buddha configuration chronologically according to the dating presented earlier in this book, there are the following cases in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu:

- 1) Group 16 (West Wall) (Figs. 4.24, 4.25a, 4.38): all five are dhyānāsana seated Buddhas of approximately the same size, stone-core sculpture, located below a large standing sculpture triad, date ca. 400;
- 2) Group 23 (South Wall) (Figs. 5.30a, b and 5.32): all five are dhyānāsana seated Buddhas, clay/stucco technique, grouped in two sections (3 are one style; 2 are another style); located at the top of the South Wall, dating probably ca. 410, with possible minor restoration. Can possibly be a separation into Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa as a set of three, and Śākyamuni and Maitreya (Buddha) as a set of two.

<sup>144</sup> This relation between the Group 12 paintings and the identification of the five T'an-yao colossal Buddhas at Yün-kang was first postulated by me in a lecture at Harvard for the Pre-modern China Seminar, on November 4, 1985, and again later for the AAS eastern meeting at Yale on October 4, 1986. Since then I have been exploring the evidence for the identification of the five main sculptures of the T'an-yao caves. Some initial findings will be presented at the end of Chapter 8, but this complex problem will be continuously considered in subsequent volumes of this series.

- 3) Group 20 (South Wall) (Fig. 5.57): located at the bottom of the South Wall, sculptures made of clay and stucco, all are Buddhas (four are seated, one is standing; one of the seated Buddhas is an ascetic Buddha, which is without a doubt referring to Śākyamuni). Possibly the standing image is Maitreya. They are configured in a row and the robe styles vary. The dating is ca. 415-420.
- 4) Group 12 (North Wall) (Fig. 7.41): this grouping is a wall painting on the lower portion of the North Wall. The painting is configured in a basically circular format. There are four Buddhas (two standing and two seated) and one cross-ankled Bodhisattva, who is Maitreya Bodhisattva. The dating of this configuration is ca. 425-428.

It can readily be seen that the development of this theme changes within Cave 169. The examples go from all five Buddhas being virtually the same and seated dhyānāsana (Group 16), to some distinction between the dhyānāsana Buddhas into two groups, composed of three and two (Group 23), to a further distinction by clearly identifying Śākyamuni Buddha by the ascetic form (the only Buddha to undergo ascetic practices) and perhaps an attempt to identify Maitreya Buddha by the standing Buddha (Group 20), and finally to the Group 12 configuration which is the latest and which provides a clear indication of Maitreya by representing this image as a cross-ankled Bodhisattva. Though in the Group 12 example the other four images are not distinguished by any special stylistic feature that I can discern, they are possibly identifiable by being positioned in a circular configuration that can be interpreted by knowing the position of Maitreya as the last of the chronological sequence of five. A similar method of identification can be applied to the Five T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang several decades later, but the principle of ordering appears to be different from the Group 12 example. There are multiple causes for the changes as seen in the T'an-yao caves, and these will be discussed at the end of Chapter 8 and in greater detail in another volume of this series.

##### 5. *Other representations of the Five Buddhas in China prior to ca. 400*

Other early representations of the five Buddhas are known in China prior to ca. 400. Most notable among them are the following:

- 1) Five lacquer Buddhas for the Wa-kuan ssu in Chien-k'ang under the Eastern Chin in the South, made by the famous sculptor Tai K'uei (d. 395/396);<sup>145</sup>
- 2) Five dhyānāsana Buddhas in the mandorla of the gilt bronze Buddha altar in the Ku-kung po-wu-kuan, ca. 375 A.D., from Hopei under the Yen (Fig. 2.9). These, together with the four examples ranging from ca. 400-425 in the Western Ch'in in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, comprise evidence of the five Buddha configurations in all the main regions of China (South, Northeast and Northwest) from at least the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

In searching for the sources of the five-Buddha configurations in China, the most fruitful results come from the investigation of the art of the Gandhāra and Afghanistan regions of northwestern India, and especially from the art that appears on the stupas. Because of the importance and the lack of any substantial study of the subject of the early appearance of the five Buddha iconography, as well as of other sets of multiple Buddhas in the Buddhist art of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, we will turn our attention

<sup>145</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 95-96.

in Chapter 8 to presenting a preliminary study of the subject with regard to examples of some of the exceedingly interesting and important examples of art from Gandhāra and Afghanistan which appear to have a critical bearing on understanding the appearance of certain iconographic sets in the early Buddhist art of China. At that time we will return to the example in Group 12 and the sets of five Buddhas in Cave 169.

#### E. Group 13: Wall Paintings (*far right*)

Only a few parts of the painting of Group 13 adjacent to Group 12 on the east can still be made out (Figs. 7.26, 7.43). The main image, which is mostly all missing, was clearly the scene of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the seven jewel stupa from Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra*. The top of a large pagoda niche with the “W” three stems of chattras (umbrellas) curve upward from a rim of a “stupa” niche beneath which can still be seen the painting of two separate canopies with a colophon between them. This portion is very similar to the stupa with the two Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated with legs pendant in the Group 11 painting (Figs. 7.26, 7.34, 5.15a, b) as well as with the earlier painting in the Group 24 thousand Buddha painting (Figs. 5.14a, b), both of which still retain the label inscription. The Group 13 example is undoubtedly the same iconography and probably the Buddhas were configured the same way with both legs pendant. It was noted in the Group 24 study above how this is an unusual manner not seen in other surviving Chinese representations of this time. The design on the outer rim of the niche is the “peacock feather” or “laurel leaf” design (called fish-scale by the Chinese), related to the niche designs seen in Kizil Cave 38 (Fig. 3.20a) and different from the rim design in Groups 11 and 24, which are striped, like blocks of jewel substance. The canopies have scalloped edges and a golden top. The colophon inscription is fragmentary: “To-pao-fo dwells ... preaching the Dharma ? ? teaching ?” (see Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 7).

Above the niche hovering in the space around the chattras is a flying celestial. The one on the left (facing), dives with arms outstretched holding a bowl of sweets in the upraised right hand (Fig. 7.43). The one on the other side has the legs bent backwards and holds up an object (jewel?) in the right hand (Fig. 7.26). Beneath the celestial on the left side is a standing Bodhisattva (or deva) holding a long flower garland raised up between both hands. The figure has a green scarf over the left shoulder and white under robe with black parallel fold lines. The white crown and prominent white highlights on the face are similar to the manner in which the large attendants of Group 12 are painted. Part of another similar though somewhat small figure is seen below the figure holding the garland. Part of the white crown, brown circular head halo, green scarf and flesh-colored lotus pedestal still remains near a three-column colophon that is now blank (Figs. 7.26, 7.35).

In the lower part, below the large missing portion, is a seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā under a canopy with circular head halo and mandorla and a large circular lotus seat. He is attended by two standing figures (Figs. 7.26, 7.44a, b). The right attendant has a brown robe over most of the body, including the hands, and the hair pulled into three knots on top of the head. The left attendant bares the right shoulder and has his hands in the añjali mudrā. These may be Bodhisattva attendants, each on a lotus pedestal and with a circular head halo (missing on the left attendant). A few green lotus buds are scattered between the images. The faint remains of the top portion of a monk in añjali mudrā can be seen below the left attendant, which may also be a monk standing on a lotus pedestal. Like the other paintings in Groups 11 and 12, the sweep of the lines and sense of rapidity and competence of execution imparts a fresh immediacy and liveliness to the images.

Apparently there is another dhyanāsana Buddha on a lotus pedestal to the right (facing) of the first group as well as the remains of a standing monk (?) to the Buddha's left (not drawn in Fig. 7.26). The condition of the wall surface is broken or deteriorated beyond this. It seems possible that below the depiction of the stupa with the Buddhas Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna there may have been a row of several Buddhas, each with one or two attendants. These could very well refer to the "transformed bodies of Śākyamuni" who came (each with attendants) from the ten-directions to witness the opening of the seven jewel stupa of Prabhūtaratna as explained in riveting detail in Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra* (see translation of the text in Chapter 4).

#### F. *Conclusions: Wall Paintings of Groups 11, 12 and 13*

Major elements of this group of important early paintings are summarized and evaluated according to style, dating, iconography and the donor figures.

##### 1. *Artistic Style and Dating*

Although there are some distinctions between the painting style of each of these three panels, the general style is very similar and they were probably executed around the same time, probably by different artists. The differences include the usage of lapis lazuli blue only in Group 11 and the usage of white highlights on the face only in Groups 12 and 13 (and not in Group 11). It is likely that Group 11 is slightly earlier as the top row of two standing Buddhas and two left (facing) donors likely were done at the time of the three standing Buddha sculptures of Group 9, discussed above as probably dating ca. 425. As noted in the discussion of the cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva of Group 12, the dharmachakra mudrā is seen in other works from around the time of the stone stupa of Kao dated 428 and in others from the Chiu-ch'üan region into the 430's. The stone stupas of earlier date than 428 did not use the dharmachakra mudrā. This is an indication that the usage in Kansu may have been by around 428 or perhaps slightly earlier. The bold style of brushwork relates rather well with the bold linear style of the Chi-te stone stupa from Tun-huang dated 426 (Fig. 7.9c).

The artistic style of painting shows linkage with the painting techniques known from the wall paintings of the Wei-Chin tombs near Chiu-ch'üan.<sup>146</sup> The bold, free and almost sketchy style imparts a vigor to the paintings, but there is a consequent lack of refinement. The Group 11, 12 and 13 style is bolder than the painting style of the Group 24 east wall thousand Buddha painting, even though the paintings of this panel, dated above to ca. 400, show many similar forms and techniques, such as the usage of the scallop-edged canopy, and the form of stupa niche for Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna. Even though this is the case, the Group 11, 12, and 13 paintings are not done in the same time period: the color scheme is markedly different using malachite green and lapis lazuli blue, the attendant figures are much more prominent, there is the usage of the peaked halo and the flowering tree motif canopy, the water motif lotus pedestal Buddha seat, a different manner of portraying the scarves and shawls of the Bodhisattvas and apsaras figures, more pronounced importance in the lotus pedestals, which use a two-tone wash, the depiction of donor figures, and so on. The conclusion seems to be that the Group 24 thousand Buddha paintings of ca. 400 and the Groups 11, 12 and 13 paintings were both done by artists trained in the traditional style associated with art of the Kansu region, only in different

<sup>146</sup> Rhie (1999), fig. 2.20.

time periods: the Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddha panel of ca. 400, and the Groups 11, 12 and 13 paintings ca. 425-ca. 428.

Both the Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddha panel paintings and the Groups 11, 12 and 13 paintings are, however, different in most respects from the paintings of Group 6 dated 424, which, as discussed above, seem to be a style possibly associated with the South. It is probably the interjection of this more refined technique and new forms—seen especially in the standing Śākyamuni and Maitreya Bodhisattva, in the Amitayus sculpture's mandorla, and in the depiction of donors, that exerted influences that result in some of the changes seen in the Groups 11, 12 and 13 paintings, and that consequently make them different from the early Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddha paintings. The sequence of the major paintings of Cave 169 appear to be: Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddha paintings, ca. 400, the Group 6 wall paintings of 424 and the wall paintings of Groups 11, 12 and 13 ca. 425-428 with the Group 6 paintings being a different artist lineage, probably related to the South in some way, and the others are the artistic style of the Kansu region. This shows a clear framework of painting styles which can be used to understand the paintings of other sites in Kansu. It also provides some insight into the possibilities of the introduction of outside elements, such as occurred with Group 6, where probably artists from outside the local region were invited in to do the painting and then left. This is one clear example of what one might expect, especially in this early period, but the Cave 169 case seems to be clear. This also shows the persistence of the local painting idiom over at least two generations from ca. 400 to 425, albeit interspersed by outside elements, in this case, Group 6, which made an impact, but did not completely transform the local painterly style.

## 2. *Iconographic Considerations*

This group of wall paintings presents an important array of image configurations that help to inform the Buddhist context of Western Ch'in ca. 425-428 and also sets the stage for what we see later at Yün-kang, that is, a juxtaposition of what appears to be discrete iconographic entities, but which, as a certain grouping or as a whole, suggest the usage of a particular text. As a whole they certainly confirm the Mahāyāna content of Cave 169, which has been evident in all of the images discussed in this cave, but amply confirmed by the Group 11, 12, and 13 wall paintings.

Group 11 has what appears to be four discreet iconographic representations: two Buddhas (perhaps emulating the two Buddhas of Group 9, which may not be a three-Buddha configuration); dhyānāsana Buddha triad with Hua-yen and Chandraprabha Bodhisattvas; Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī flanking Amitāyus; and the seven jewel stupa niche with Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna from Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra*. There are definitely two different texts (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* and *Lotus Sutra*), and there may be others.

Group 12 centers on one large seated teaching Buddha with two standing Bodhisattvas. A kneeling Brahmin-type ascetic could identify the scene as the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī. Above are the multiple sets of Buddhas: at least one row (maybe two) of the seven-Buddhas, a feature of many sutras, including the *Lotus Sutra*. In addition, there are what appears to be another, separate group of the five-Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa, which are cited in the *Buddhavaṃsa* (a Pali text) and in the *Bhadrakalpika* (a Mahāyāna text), the latter translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 291 or 300 A.D., as well as others.

Group 13, though mostly destroyed, clearly centers on a large depiction of the seven jewel stupa niche with Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna from Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra* as the main subject.

Secondary elements could suggest the presence of the “transformed bodies” of Śākyamuni Buddha as also described in Chapter 11. Because this Group 13 panel is readily identifiable with the *Lotus Sutra*, which was also shown to be the probable textual source for other configurations in Cave 169, such as Group 18, and probably Group 24, it is possible to consider that the Group 12 paintings are related to the *Lotus Sutra* as well. The paintings of Group 12 and 13 seem to comprise two major scenes from the *Lotus Sutra* as part of a unified program. It is even possible that Group 11 is part of this plan as well. In the case that Group 12 is referring to the *Lotus Sutra*, the diverse elements could be interpreted as elements from that sutra, including Śākyamuni preaching the *Lotus Sutra*. Certainly the five Buddhas agree with the Bhadrakalpa Buddhas referred to in the *Lotus Sutra*. The other rows of dhyānāsana Buddhas could refer to the ten-direction Buddhas or be part of the thousand Buddhas, or be the “transformation bodies” of Śākyamuni. The interesting puzzle to resolve is the presence of the Brahmā or Brahmin-like figure. Because of the strong Mahāyāna content of Cave 169, the Group 12 paintings are more likely to represent the *Lotus Sutra* than to be the Śrāvastī Miracles.

### 3. Donor and Other Figures

The portrayal of donor figures in Group 6 dating 424 A.D. shows that donors have become a major factor in the Cave 169 wall paintings. In the earlier inscriptions with the Group 24 thousand Buddha panel and the P’ing-shen repair inscription of Group 23 the donor’s names were included, but not their images or portrait depiction. That only seems to have happened with and after Group 6, which may have been a turning point in that respect in this cave. This means that the idea of portraying the donors’ portraits may have been introduced from outside, such as from the South, and then adopted for subsequent donations. This is an important indication of the development in the idea of donor portrait depiction, a feature that can be noted in the wall paintings of other sites in Kansu and in some of the Liang chou stone stupas (especially the Brahmi script stupa from Tun-huang), as will be discussed in Volume IV. It is, however, one factor to be aware of in tracing the evolution of the Buddhist art in Kansu in the Sixteen Kingdoms period.

### G. Group 14

Group 14 includes a niche with three dhyānāsana Buddha sculptures in a row located to the right (facing) and slightly lower than the Group 13 wall paintings. The prepared clay wall surface extends from Group 13 all along the large blunt cliff projection which angles towards the gaping front of the cave (Fig. 7.45). Above the niche with the three seated Buddhas is the remains of a written sutra panel. At a slightly acute angle to the right and a little lower than the row of three Buddhas, but still connected to the same clay surfacing, is the remains of a wall painting with a seated Buddha triad and three male donors. Around the corner of the blunt projection of the cliff wall at the right of the wall painting and in a somewhat high and precarious position, is the remains of the lower part of a standing clay Buddha sculpture (Fig. 7.46).

#### 1. Row of Three Seated Buddha Sculptures

The shallow rectangular niche with the three Buddha sculptures is 60 cm high, 1.60 m wide and 21 cm deep [H. 23.6 in. x W. 5.2 ft. x D. 8.2 in.] (Figs. 7.45, 7.47). The three Buddhas are seated dhyānāsana, but they are not portrayed equally. They are all different in size (from larger to smaller from left to



right) and each has some variation in the garments. Of the three, the two at the left are best preserved. The body form is relatively thick and heavy, especially in the largest Buddha at the left (Fig. 7.48). The torsos are rather short-waisted, but have a gentle curvature to the upper chest. The bodies are bolder than those of the Group 20 and 21 seated Buddhas of ca. 410-420 (Figs. 5.56a, b, 5.60, 5.66a). This shaping is quite different from the Group 6 Amitāyus seated sculpture of 424 (Fig. 6.8a, b). Rather, the shape is more akin to the seated Buddhas of the Chi-te stone stupa from Tun-huang dated 426 (Fig. 5.11). Incised lines remain the primary technique of indicating folds, but these lines are treated matter-of-factly and a bit repetitiously. They are somewhat coarse and strong, with wider spacing between the lines than seen in earlier sculptures in Cave 169. The relatively wide spacing and the manner in which the folds over the forearm make an abrupt right angle juncture as they connect with the fold lines on the thighs is a manner seen in some images such as the Rietberg Museum seated bronze Buddha of ca. 400-420 (Fig. 5.42) and in the stone stele from Sian dated 424.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, the linear scheme on the legs is like those on the bronze Buddhas of the same period, such as the Nelson Atkins Museum Buddha (Fig. 4.10), the 426 Met Museum bronze Buddha (Fig. 6.9d) and the same Rietberg Museum image noted above (Fig. 5.42). In all these images the strong folds around the legs have a horizontal curve around the leg.

The stiff borders over the chest area noted in several of the three standing Buddhas of Group 9 (Figs. 7.22, 7.25a) occur more boldly here in the central seated Buddha who wears the open sling mode with shoulder cap exposing the undergarment (Fig. 7.47). The depiction of the robes over the chest of this image shows slightly curved, vertical incised lines to depict the folds and rather wide, flat, folded hem bands. This particular type of representation appears in some of the seated Buddhas of the 426 Chi-te stone stupa (Fig. 5.11). The cowl fold on the large Buddha at the left is very bold, as is the flap hanging over the left shoulder, which, though of similar shape to those elements in the Group 7 Buddha (Fig. 7.16c), is simpler and more powerful but less interesting in the Group 14 Buddha (Fig. 7.48a). Swirling folds lying around the legs and the semicircular shape of the garment falling from under these hems in the center front is a new mode from the earlier manner of handling this area in seated Buddhas of Cave 169 (Groups 22, 23, 21, 20 and 6). The drapery arrangement over the legs is symmetrical rather than asymmetrical as in the Group 6 Amitāyus of 424. The emphasis on the curved shape of the drapery around the legs creates a kind of semi-circular, stable base for the images, which do not appear to have individual pedestals. The far right, headless Buddha seems to have more delicate incised lines with a symmetrical, U-shaped pattern down the front of the saṅghāṭī, which is worn over both shoulders (Fig. 7.48b). This patterning relates to that on the Buddha images of the Kao Shan-mu stone stupa of 428 (Fig. 7.42). The faces of the Group 14 Buddhas are round with small, well modeled features. This type of face with small eyes appears in the Northern Wei 443 Maitreya, which, however, has a generally softer appearance and probably dates later (Fig. 3.19).

The circular mandorlas of each Buddha of Group 14 are beautifully painted with an especially large circular head halo (Figs. 7.47, 7.48a, b). These mandorlas show motifs that are related to the mandorlas of the Group 9 Buddhas of ca. 425 (Fig. 7.22), such as the same refined twisted rope design and band of wavy flames. The pearl designs with alternating red and green colored dots in the center appeared as a new motif in the body halo of the left (ruined) Buddha of Group 7 (Fig. 7.20c). A more richly delineated leafy pattern than occurred in the mandorla of the central Buddha of Group 9 (Fig. 7.25b) occurs in the green band of vine rinceau of both the head and body halos of the largest Buddha of Group 14

<sup>147</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.88a

(Fig. 7.48a). The foliage motif, drawn with black lines, reminds one of the floral bands in some Gupta period halos. The Group 14 example may be an early inclusion of this Gupta motif. It is a more elaborate vine motif than appears in the green band of the mandorla of Amitāyus in Group 6 (Fig. 6.11a) and in the Buddha of Group 9 in Fig. 7.25b. These examples seem to represent a short evolution from simpler to more complex forms. The outer rim of the body halo of the Group 14 Buddha in Fig. 7.48a has well defined “fishhook” style flame patterns, more restrained but of similar type as those seen in the head halo of the seated stone Buddha of Group 23 (Fig. 5.20, 5.21).

This group would appear to date later than the Group 9 Buddha sculptures of ca. 425, to have some features seen in bronze Buddha images from the North around the 415-425 period, and to match well with the images of the Chi-te and Kao Shan-mu stone stupas of 426 and 428 respectively. These factors suggest a date around 426-428 for the Group 14 three seated Buddhas. It is unlikely that there was work continuing after the 429 earthquake and subsequent famine and disasters of the Western Ch'in in 430. The style of the images does not appear to relate to the Northern Wei sculptures of the 440s and 450's.

These three Buddhas appear to represent a set or group, most likely of the Buddhas of the Three Times (Present, Past and Future), which are in many of the sutras translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425.<sup>148</sup> The three-Buddha configurations may also have occurred in Cave 169 in Groups 16, 4, 7, and 9 (only Groups 4 and 9 have all three images surviving). The Group 14 case is the only group of three Buddhas that are all seated, which is a departure from the predominantly standing forms used in those earlier examples. Among the rare inscriptions from Gandhāra at the monastery of Jauliān in Taxila is one case of the remains of three seated Buddhas on each side of the lower level of a square stupa (D5) with some remaining inscriptions indicating the identity of Kāśyapa (Buddha of the Past) as the central image and Śākyamuni (Buddha of the Present) as the image on Kāśyapa's right.<sup>149</sup> The third image is probably Maitreya as Buddha of the Future, though no inscriptions remain for the this third image in stupa D5. This configuration in Group 14 in Cave 169 could also have been following a similar three seated Buddha iconographic model as seen at Jauliān, and possibly also as seen at Mai-chi shan, as we shall discuss further in Chapter 9. In all these cases Maitreya is shown in his Buddha form of the Future and not in his current form as a Bodhisattva.

## 2. Sutra Writing and Wall Paintings

Above the niche with the three seated Buddha sculptures is a panel W. 1.65 m x H. 70 cm [5.4 ft. x 2.2 ft.] containing a sutra written in black ink in 53 lines (Figs. 7.46, 7.49).<sup>150</sup> This sutra is the *Fo shuo wei-ts'eng-yu ching* 佛說未曾有經.<sup>151</sup> The writing is greatly worn out and fragmentary. This sutra is known in the Koryō Tripiṭaka (from the Haeinsa woodblocks).<sup>152</sup> The sutra is one chüan and was translated in the Later Han period by an unknown translator.<sup>153</sup> The text speaks about the merit and virtue of

<sup>148</sup> For one example see Chapter 4 section II.B.2. no. 5.ii, pp. 81-82 (from the “kuan” sutra *Tso-ch'an san-mei ching* translated by Kumārajīva in 402-407 (Korean Catalogue, K991); for others, see Chapter 4.

<sup>149</sup> See below, Chapter 8, section II.C.2.c. and Figs. 8.14a, b.

<sup>150</sup> Teng (1994), section by Wei Wen-pin, pp. 10-11 has the remaining text of this sutra, which is somewhat damaged.

<sup>151</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), pp. 10-11.

<sup>152</sup> *Daizōkyō*, 16 (T 688), pp. 781-782; Korean Catalogue: K 237, where it says it was carved in 1243 A.D. in the Haeinsa blocks.

<sup>153</sup> Though it is sometimes classified as part of the Adbhutadharma class of Buddhist writings (the class of “the rare”, the 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 sections), this text does not appear to be the Abhutadharma nor does it correspond to the “wei-ts'eng

the Buddha, and about the making of stupas and Buddha images as being of much greater merit and virtue than other material donations, such as those of structures for the housing of monks. It has not been translated into English as far as I know. The text in the *Daizokyo* is translated here. In most ways it corresponds to the remains on the Group 14 writing, though much of the end portion is lost in the latter, so it is difficult to compare.<sup>154</sup>

a. Translation of the *Wei-ts'eng-yu ching* (T 688)

Thus have I heard. One time the Buddha was in Rājagṛha city at Gṛdhrakūta Mountain with 1,250 great bhikṣus. At that time the honorable one, Ānanda, in the early morning put on his robe and holding his alms bowl entered Rājagṛha city only thinking with mindfulness to beg for food. He saw that there was a newly made great building, a storied pavilion of lofty appearance. The doors and windows were carved and decorated and the walls were perfectly ordered, without having wind and dust, and protecting against cold and heat. The honorable Ānanda saw this and then thought, "If a good man or a good woman who were to make a majestic and beautiful pavilion like this and donate it to the monks of the four directions (the saṅgha of the four quarters); or, if after the Tathāgata's Parinirvāṇa, there were a good man or a good woman who, with a mustard seed sized (i.e., extremely small) śarīra raised a stupa (t'a) the size of a mango, with the ch'a like a needle and the top having umbrellas like the leaves of the jujube tree, or made a Buddha image like fermented wheat (i.e., light golden color), [then] as for these two [forms of] merit and virtue (kung-te 功德), which would be better?"

At that time the honorable Ānanda begged for food and [then] returned to his original place. After the eating of food was finished, he gathered together his robe and bowl, washed his feet, and then he went to where the Buddha was staying. With one mind (i-hsin 一心) respectfully bowing his head to Buddha, he then moved to one side and sat, saying to the Buddha, "World Honored One, at this place very early in the morning I put on my robe and holding my alms bowl entered Rājagṛha to beg for food. I saw that there is one newly made great building, a layered pavilion with lofty appearance. The doors and windows were carved and decorated; the walls were perfectly ordered without having wind and dust, and protecting against cold and heat. Then I thought, "If a good man or a good woman who were to make a majestic and beautiful pavilion like this and donate it to the monks of the four directions (the saṅgha of the four quarters); or, after the Tathāgata's Parinirvāṇa, if there were a good man or a good woman who, with mustard seed-size (extremely small) śarīra raised a stupa (t'a) the size of a mango, with the ch'a like a needle and the top having umbrellas like the leaves of the jujube tree, or made a Buddha image like fermented wheat (light golden color), then with regard to the merit and virtue of these two, which is better?"

At that time the World Honored One told Ānanda saying, "Excellent, excellent, Ānanda. You ask the Tathāgata for the sake of lots of people, for peace and joy and for sentient beings, out of pity for the world, for the multitude, and for benefitting heavenly beings. Ānanda, listen attentively, think well, and remember this. Jampūvīpa (Yen-fou-t'i 閻浮低) is 7,000 yōjanas (yu-yen 由苑) wide. The north is wide and the south is narrow. The faces of the people resemble a wheel shape. As for its land, it is full of sweet sugar cane, bamboo and reeds, rice plants, hemp, and dense forests. It is without empty places, as if like one body. Ānanda, the various grasses and trees are entirely for humans, who can obtain Stream-enterer (Hsü-t'o-huan 須陀洹; Srota-āpanna), Once-returner (Ch'i-t'o-han 斯陀含;

yu" writings in the *Lotus Sutra* or in the *Ch'ang-a-han ching* (translated into Chinese in 385). It is a separate text from these.

<sup>154</sup> I am grateful to Myeong-beop Sunim of the Unmunsa in Korea for her assistance in finalizing this translation.

Sakṛdāgāmin), Non-returner (A-na-han 阿那含; Anāgāmin), Arhat (A-lo-han 阿羅漢) and Pratyeka Buddha (P'i-chih-fo 辟支佛). If there is a person who throughout his life offers (kung-yang) robes and alms bowls, food and drink, beds and seats, healing medicines, rooms, and provides that which is necessary completely sufficient, and later after death for each raises a stupa and for each raised stupa himself offers veneration with incense and flowers, dancing and music, burning incense, smearing incense (on the body in order to worship Buddha), and powdering incense, and [offering] banners and flags and precious canopies, all this completely sufficient, then what do you think? The merit and virtue like this, are they rather a lot?" Ānanda replied to Buddha saying, "Extremely much, World Honored One. Extremely much, Sugata. This good man or good woman would obtain great merit and virtue."

Buddha told Ānanda, "In addition to Jambūvīpa, also there is Godāniya (Ch'ü-yeh-ni 瞿耶尼),<sup>155</sup> which is 8,000 yōjanas wide. The people's faces are like a half moon. Among these people there are those who make great merit and virtue. Again Ānanda, in addition to Godāniya, also there is Pūrva-videha (Fu-yü-tai 弗于逮),<sup>156</sup> which is 9,000 yōjanas wide. People's faces are round and full. Among them are people who all also like making great merit and virtue. Again Ānanda, in addition to Pūrva-videha, there is also Uttarakuru (Yü-tan-yüeh 鬱單腰),<sup>157</sup> which is 10,000 yōjanas wide and people's faces are square. There the people also all like to make great merit and virtue in this way." Buddha told Ānanda, "Indra's (Shih-t'i-tan-yin 釋提桓因) great gorgeous majestic hall (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿) has tracery and carvings that are subtle and uniquely fine. There are 84,000 jewel pillars with heavenly clear vaidūrya with yellow gold between them. Above, a net completely covers [the hall], golden sand spreads over the ground, and the railings and balustrades are made of rare sandalwood. Again, Ānanda, there is Indra's (Tien-t'i shih 天帝釋) great gorgeous majestic hall (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿) with 84,000 jewel windows. Also between the heavenly clear vaidūrya windows there is yellow gold, and above there is made a covering net. [The hall] is spread out with gold sand and sandalwood railings. Again, Ānanda, there is Indra's great gorgeous majestic hall (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿) with 84,000 heavenly purple-red jewel windows, subtly and majestically adorned like above. Again, Ānanda, there is Indra's great gorgeous majestic hall (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿) having 84,000 high lookout tower pavilions [on all] four corners coming out and encircled with many jewels decorated also again like above." Buddha told Ānanda, "If there is a good man or a good woman who makes this Indra's great gorgeous majestic hall (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿) and offers it for the saṅgha of the four quarters, with regard to this, what do you think? Would this good man or good woman with this causation attain great merit and virtue or not?" Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Extremely much, World Honored One. Extremely much, Sugata. This good man or good woman would attain great merit and virtue."

Buddha told Ānanda, "In addition to the merit and virtue of the four worlds and also besides the merit and virtue [of making] Indra's great gorgeous majestic halls (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿), if a good man or good woman who makes one hundred thousand million of Indra's great gorgeous majestic halls (ta-chuang-yen tien 大莊嚴殿) and offers them to the saṅgha of the four quarters; and again, if a good man or good woman who, after Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, with mustard seed-sized śarīra, raises a stupa like a mango fruit, its ch'a (spire) like a needle, and above there is placed plate canopies like the leaves of the jujube tree; or if one makes a Buddha image like fermented wheat (golden color),

<sup>155</sup> The continent west of Mt. Sumeru. Soothill (1937 and 1977), p. 465.

<sup>156</sup> The continent east of Mt. Sumeru. *Ibid.*, p. 465.

<sup>157</sup> The continent north of Mt. Sumeru. *Ibid.*, p. 465.

then even if this [i.e., the former two] merit and virtue reaches to 100 times it cannot reach [the latter two]. [Even] one hundred one thousand ten-thousand hundred-thousand-fold [still the former] cannot reach [the latter]. You cannot calculate the quantity. Ānanda, [you] should know, this is the Tathāgata's unsurpassed merit and virtue [which has] morality (chieh fen 戒分), meditation (ting fen 定分), prajñā (wisdom; chih-hui fen 智慧分), liberation (mokṣa; chieh-t'o fen 解脫分), and full awareness of his state of liberation (chih-chien chieh-t'o fen 知見解脫分).<sup>158</sup> Again, Ānanda, the Tathāgata's unlimited merit and virtue has great supernatural power of Riddhipāda (the supernatural power to appear at will in any place), and transformative power, as well as giving (dāna; t'an 檀) pāramita (po-lo-mi 波羅蜜), morality (śīla; shih 尸) pāramita, patience (kṣanti; ch'an-ti 羼提) pāramita, effort (vīrya; pi-li-yeh 毘梨耶) pāramita, meditation (dhyāna; ch'an 禪) pāramita, wisdom (prajñā; pan-jo 般若) pāramita, like this etc., unsurpassable merit and virtue."

At that time Buddha told the honorable Ānanda, "You have attentively received this sutra." Ānanda said to Buddha, "Having received this teaching, World Honored One, what should we call it? Among the Tathāgata's Dharma, how should we receive and keep it in mind?" Buddha told Ānanda, "This is called the *Wei-ts'eng-yu fa* 未曾有法. It is completely pure and mysterious Dharma and Upāya (fang-pien 方便). I therefore earnestly give this Dharma [to you] and ask you to frequently extend it, and also explain it for the various heavenly beings (t'ien-jen 天人), Asuras (A-hsiu-lo 何修羅), Nāgas (Lung 龍), Yakṣas (Yeh-ch'a 夜叉), Gandharvas (Kan-t'a-p'o 乾闥婆), Garuḍas (Chia-liu-lo 伽留羅), Kin-naras (Chin-na-lo 緊那羅), Mahoragas (Ma-hou-lo-chia 摩睺羅伽), humans and non-humans. You should make the seeds of merit and virtue of the Tathāgata's good roots and let all those who hear [this Dharma] enter the merit and virtue of the Tathāgata's good roots. Because of this cause therefore [they] will separate from suffering and all will become Buddha." All the bhikṣus heard and rejoiced and paid reverence.

Yao-wang fo 藥王佛 Yao wang p'u-sa 藥王菩薩 Yao-shang p'u-sa 藥上菩薩 Tsui-shang t'ien-wang fo 最上天王佛.<sup>159</sup>

This sutra on the wall of Group 14 in Cave 169, though short and a text translated into Chinese in the Later Han (probably around the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century), is of special interest because it is the remains of an original writing probably datable to approximately 425-428 A.D. It is one of only a few rare original hand written sutra texts still surviving from the early period of Buddhism in China. Some written on paper are known from Turfan (ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> century) and Tun-huang, but this one in Cave 169 is the only one known so far written in the early cave temples of China as far as I know. It clearly reveals early Mahāyāna stress on value of making stupas and images, so it appears to reflect Mahāyāna issues as also seen in the *Lotus Sutra*, with which it shares some similar terminology, such as merit and virtue (kung-te 功德) and upāya (fang-pien 方便). The fact that it is seen in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 from ca. 425-428 shows that it is still considered a pertinent text at that time in China. It is written in a low area of the north wall, and presumably easy for visitors to read. Thus it is meant for an inspirational text to help people understand the Mahāyāna Buddhist values of merit and virtue in regard to the making stupas and images. It thus helps those who come to the cave to understand the Mahāyāna in its practical and mysterious aspect. It is a different kind of text than seen in the earlier

<sup>158</sup> The wu-fen 五分: the five characteristics of Buddha.

<sup>159</sup> [*Fo shuo*] *Wei-ts'eng-yu ching*, *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 16, (T688), pp. 781-782.



inscriptions, but comes perhaps as one geared specifically to teaching the various visitors/donors who may come to the cave.

The appearance of four names (Yao-wang fo, Yao-wang P'u-sa, Yao-shang p'u-sa and Tsui-shang t'ien-wang fo) at the end of the texts appear unrelated to the text, but are nevertheless contained in the oldest known surviving version of this text in the Koryō Tripiṭaka (Fig. 7.50). Later editors of the Tripiṭaka consider these 16 characters to be an addition to the text and not part of the original. It is not known whether or not these same names were originally there at the end of the written version on the north wall of Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Group 14), but it does not appear so.

To the right (facing) of this sutra text is the remains of a monk image with his right arm stretched across his chest. There is an accompanying inscription: "bhikṣu T'an ... 比丘曇 ..." He is likely to have been a donor of the sutra writing (Fig. 7.49). Above the end portion of the sutra writing are the fragmentary remains of two Buddhas (Fig. 7.46). The one on the east side (right, facing) is reported to have an inscription "A-mi-t'o fo hsiang 阿彌陀佛像" (image of Amitābha Buddha).<sup>160</sup>

### b. *Wall Paintings*

The wall paintings at the eastern (right) side of the niche of the three Buddhas shows the remains of a seated Buddha with a circular mandorla with two attendant Bodhisattvas and three standing male donors (facing, at the left) (Figs. 7.46, 7.51). Most of the Buddha is missing and only the wide, plain color bands of the circular mandorla and the circular head halo remain (Fig. 7.51). The right attendant holds a fly whisk in the raised left hand. This image is interesting as a comparison with the similarly posed attendant in the triad panel of the Group 24 east wall thousand Buddha panel (Fig. 5.8a, b). In the Group 14 example the image is far bolder, simpler and more powerful.

Fig. 7.52 is a detail of the three male donor figures. They all hold long stalked lotus buds in different positions from bending upwards, to slightly upturned, to drooping down. This interest in individualization of the figures shows a lack of repetitive consistency suggesting that standardization or formalization has not set in with regard to the presentation of donor figures. The line drawing is thick and vigorous in the manner of the paintings of Groups 11, 12, and 13, but is a step more simplified, suggesting a style based on the former examples, but one that is coarser and more abbreviated. The dating is probably not far removed from the Group 11, 12 and 13 paintings, possibly around 425-28 like the Group 14 sculptures. The Group 14 sculptures and wall paintings are all likely to have been made around the same time.

### 3. *Fragment of Large Standing Buddha Sculpture*

At the edge of the wall near the opening and a little higher than the painting is the remains of the lower part of a standing clay Buddha sculpture (Figs. 7.45, 7.46). Little can be seen, but it was clearly a rather impressive image on the narrow face of the cliff, which is at right angles to the other portions of Group 14. The degree of detail and the loose quality of the pleats in the hems suggest a different style, perhaps one related to some images from elsewhere in Kansu (such as some images from T'ien-t'i shan near Wu-wei in central Kansu). It appears to have been made later than the Group 7 and Group 9 standing Buddhas in Cave 169.

<sup>160</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 11). The description by Wei Wen-pin says these two Buddhas are both seated, but the drawing (the same as in Fig. 7.46 in this volume) in Teng (1994), p. 9 shows a seated Buddha at the left and a standing figure (Buddha?) at the right. Both have lotus pedestals.



#### 4. *Concluding Comments on Group 14*

Though somewhat disparate, Group 14 nevertheless offers some interesting developments that help chart the course of developments in Buddhist art in the late 420's at the end of the Western Ch'in. It is likely that after 429 there is reduced artistic work in Cave 169, so it is estimated that the Group 14 materials date around 425-428, following the paintings of Group 12 and the sculptures of Group 7 and 9. While neither sculptures or paintings in Group 14 show remarkable innovations, there is a bold and spirited style in both that indicate a relatively high quality and continued interest among donors. The appearance of the sutra writing in black ink is a significant remains, unlike anything seen elsewhere among known remains of this time. It may well reflect a custom of combining the texts with the art, such as also appears in most of the fourteen known stone stupas (shih-t'a) of Liang chou (and Turfan) which carve a short excerpt from the *Tseng i a-han ching* around the middle zone of the stupa, as seen in the Stupa of Kao dated 428 from Chiu-ch'üan (Fig. 7.42). Another point of some interest is the inscription of an "A-mi-t'o-fo hsiang", and image of Amitābha Buddha. The usage of Amitābha contrasts with the name of Amitāyus used for the Group 6 niche, which, as we have amply discussed above, shows many signs of influences from the South (Eastern Chin and [Liu] Sung) where Amitāyus was the favored name. The usage of Amitābha here might be one clue that the donors, monks and artists are more localized than those involved with the Group 6 niche, its sculptures and wall paintings.

#### H. *Group 3: Buddha Niche*

This large niche (H. 2.30 m; W. 2.30 m; D. 65 cm [7½ ft. x 7½ ft x 2 ft.]) is high up on a precarious slanting part of the North Wall and faces at an angle out towards the gaping opening in the East Wall (Fig. 7.45). All three sides of the niche are artificially constructed, but the right (facing) side attaches to part of the vertical rock wall behind (Fig. 7.53a, b). Inside, on a low, flat, rectangular pedestal sits a dhyānāsana Buddha (H. 1.35 m [4.42 ft.]) accompanied by a right standing attendant (probably a Bodhisattva) holding a fly whisk in the left hand and lightly holding the end of the long scarf in the lowered right hand. At the Buddha's left is another standing attendant (probably Vajrapāṇi) holding up a large vajra in his right hand and originally holding the scarf in the now mostly broken lowered left hand.

The Buddha is somewhat akin to the style of the two right seated Buddhas of Group 23 on the South Wall (Fig. 5.39), but it more clearly stresses heavier mass and less emphasis on cohesive linear details. The large hands (possibly repaired) are held on edge rather than flat. The saṅghāṭī is close fitting and shows very few incised fold lines over the broad surfaces. The lines that are there (Fig. 7.53b) are so delicate as to be nearly invisibly and the robe appears as though plain. The scheme of the incised lines is similar to images in some of the Liang chou stone stupas, such as the Stupa of Kao of ca. 428 (Fig. 7.42). The hem fold moves with a distinct "S" curve over wrists and legs, a feature that appears in the Wei Wen-lang stele of 424 (Fig. 5.34b), though in less exaggerated form than in the Group 3 Buddha. The long, back edge of the robe flares out stiffly from the left shoulder, but lacks any sense of a vigorous, wavy patterned edge as seen on the Group 7 Buddha (Fig. 7.16c), the Group 9 central Buddha (Fig. 7.25b), or even compared with the largest Buddha of Group 14 (Fig. 7.48a). The face is big and long with large features. This style face appears in the Buddhas of the black stone stupa fragment from Chiu-ch'üan of ca. 434 (Fig. 5.65). The open shaping of the eyes and the big, sharply cut mouth and

generally heavy impression of the facial features is also associable with the Northern Wei sculptures of the early 440's.<sup>161</sup>

The Buddha image sits on a slightly raised platform pedestal. It is similar to the type of pedestals used in the seated Buddhas of the Stupa of Kao dated 428 (Fig. 7.42). The front edge of the niche has a patterning of red and white honeysuckle design. This pattern is not seen in other examples in Cave 169. It is quite simple and does not intertwine as much as seen in later examples in the Northern Wei period wall paintings in the Mokao caves at Tun-huang. Rather, it is close to the honeysuckle pattern seen in Tun-huang Cave 275 of ca. 430.

The attendant Bodhisattva shows a similar tendency towards heaviness of form in the torso and limbs. In general type and dress, it bears some relation to the styles of the Group 22 Bodhisattva (Fig. 5.53) and the Bodhisattvas of Group 6 dated 424 (Figs. 6.15b), but it lacks the sense of lightness and grace of those sculptures. The Group 3 image has a round, chubby face and a loose flow of long hair. A long necklace hangs to the waist, somewhat like the Maitreya painting of Group 6 (Fig. 7.9a), but it is not asymmetrical like the Group 6 example. The long chest necklace ornament becomes prominent in sculptures at Tun-huang in Cave 275 (probably ca. 430) and continues as a feature into the early Northern Wei period at Tun-huang, as seen in Cave 279 (probably ca. 450), where it is treated more gracefully and with more sensitivity to interesting detail than in the style of the Group 3 image (Fig. 7.54). Overall, there is more interest in the volume and mass of form than in the patterns of the drape in the Group 3 Bodhisattva. The resulting simplicity emphasizes the mass more than seen in the Bodhisattvas of Group 6 of 424 A.D., but is more akin to what is seen in the sculptures of Cave 275 at Tun-huang (ca. 430) and the Liang chou stone stupas of ca. 428-436. It does not have the refinement and tasteful linear detail of the Bodhisattvas of Tun-huang Cave 259, which probably date in the late 450's of the Northern Wei period.

The Vajrapāṇi is a new type of image and is interesting for its characterization of a fierce face with bared upper teeth biting the lower lip and dramatically curved creases spreading out across the lower jaw (Fig. 7.55). He holds a rather bulbous vajra, but it is basically the large type seen in Gandhāran and Central Asian art of the early periods. He wears a kind of body armor with high, stand-up collar, short, tight sleeves with a pleated hem (of the under robe?), a coat-like opening, and a short pleated hem just below hip level. This armor has various sections emphasizing the upper chest and a slim and sinuous mid section (painted white). A low-waisted belt gathers the soft armor coat into three loose swags. A long cape with wavy edges spreads out behind him to lower leg level, and the dhoti, green in color, has long vertical ties in the center similar to those of the right attendant. The hourglass shaping of the upper torso reveals some interest in naturalistic definition of the body. The posture has a clear sense of bending, which can be related to some of the trigram figures in the Liang chou stone stupas, with which Group 3 appears to have a number of features in common. Similar pleated or ruffed edges appear in the Group 20 ascetic Buddha (Fig. 5.62) and in the decoration of the small black stone stupa fragment, probably dating ca. 430 (Fig. 5.65). There are several black ink inscriptions written on the mandorla of the Vajrapāṇi image. One is dated 515 in the Northern Wei period and another is T'ien-pao 12<sup>th</sup> year (753).

The mandorlas are not peaked but all are rounded. Those of the attendants are plain bands of red and green with a plain circular head halo. The Buddha's head halo has a narrow band of faint lotus petals and an outer band of nine dhyānāsana Buddhas. Nine Buddhas occur in other head halos of a main

<sup>161</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.98, 2.99.

dhyānāsana Buddha who may be associated with the *Lotus Sutra*.<sup>162</sup> The encompassing mandorla has a prominent red flame in the inner band and a wide outer band of figures on a red background. One of the figures, in the lower right (facing) seems to be a reborn being on a lotus while the two figures above seem to be monks, each with a head halo. These are difficult to interpret, but could be an indication of a Buddha land. The left side (facing) is more difficult to make out, but may have similar images.

Above the Buddha's mandorla is a canopy with a scalloped lower edge decorated with tassels and serried, closely spaced, vertical lines, somewhat similar to canopies known in the wall paintings of T'ien-t'i shan. To left and right of the canopy is a flying apsaras with dark body. The left one (facing) has a position similar to some flying celestials in the early Tun-huang wall paintings. Near the feet of that apsaras is a large circular, doughnut-shaped lotus flower of similar kind as seen in the Group 23 paintings on the South Wall (Fig. 5.33), but of a more timid and less forcefully patterned style. The figural type and use of plain washes of color and rather subdued lines is a different painting technique among the paintings of Cave 169 that is not related to the technique of Groups 11-14, or of Group 6, or of the mandorlas of Groups 7 and 9. In general the Group 3 painting style is a little more naturalistic, but without the vigor of line as seen in the other wall paintings in Cave 169. The technique and style of paintings does not appear to be related to Chinese styles but to be adapting to a foreign manner.

Part of the niche wall near the Vajrapāṇi image joins with some wall paintings made on the surface of the rock wall at the back of the North Wall (Figs. 7.53a, b). One scene that remains, and is so far unidentified, on the upper register of those wall paintings near the Vajrapāṇi, shows a scene with figures within in a rectangular zone or structure bordered on top by a curtain canopy and below by a decorative brick design of alternating colors (Fig. 7.56a). Inside this setting is a Buddha in white outer robe sitting with both legs pendant on a round brown rattan stool with white lotus petal at the bottom. He has a round head halo and mandorla. With his left hand the Buddha holds his robe while with his right hand he gestures outward. He seems to be speaking to two listeners, who appear to be ladies in foreign dress. They wear garb similar to that seen in the wall paintings of Kizil and in the trigram figures of some of the Liang chou stone stupas. A white crane appears between the Buddha and the nearest seated lady; this suggests that the scene may be part of a specific narrative. The style is the same plain wash with a few delicate lines as seen in the wall paintings inside the Group 3 niche, so it is likely they were both made around the same time.

More fragments of wall paintings remain along the back of the North Wall, and holes in the cliff indicate more usage of this rather precarious portion of the North Wall. The drawing of a Bodhisattva in Fig. 7.56b appears to come from these wall painting, near the stenciled number 169 near the open edge of the cave. It is an interesting form, with clearly segmented torso of the kind known especially in the paintings of Tun-huang. This painting may be another indicator of new styles coming into the art of Cave 169 around the very end of the Western Ch'in or possibly stretching into the 430's, despite the collapse of the Western Ch'in in 433. Buddhist activity may have continued in the cave, particularly in the areas of the eastern side of the North Wall, perhaps a difficult area not chosen for earlier work.

In conclusion, the dating of the Group No. 3 sculptures would appear to be later than those of Groups 7, 9 and 14. The sculptures in a number of respects are related to sculptural traditions within Cave 169, but some elements appear to match most closely with the sculptures of Cave 275 at Tun-huang (ca. 430) and to some of the Liang-chou stone stupas dated or datable to ca. late 420's up to ca. 436. The style seems to predate the images of the 440's under the Northern Wei and the images of

<sup>162</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.71a

Cave 259 at Tun-huang of ca. 450. The Group 3 sculptures are important as indicators of an increasing heaviness in mass that can also be seen evolving in the Liang-chou stone stupas from Chiu-ch'üan and Tun-huang (to be studied in detail in Vol. IV), which can be dated with some accuracy. Group 3 probably dates between ca. 428-433 and represents the changing styles in central and western Kansu in the late 420's and early 430's.<sup>163</sup> The painting styles suggest new modes of technique unrelated to the earlier wall paintings in Cave 169. They are possibly influenced by foreign modes being adapted without much infusion of the indigenous Chinese painting traditions.

The iconography of this niche is difficult to understand. It could have some reference to well-known triads in the Mathurā school, such as seen in Fig. 7.57 (dated year 32, possibly 152 A.D.), which appears to show Vajrapāṇi and a Bodhisattva with a bunch of lotus flowers (likely to be Avalokiteśvara) as the attendants. Other triads both from Mathurā and Gandhāra show Indra and Brahmā as attendants of Śākyamuni. While there are some features of the Group 3 sculpture triad that could suggest Indra (armor) and Brahma (long hair and fly whisk), these are not likely for other reasons, notably the wrathful expression on the left attendant and the lack of more Brahmin characteristics on the right attendant. While the Mathurā triad in Fig. 7.57 could suggest a triad of Śākyamuni with Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara, the identity of the Bodhisattva in the Group 3 triad is uncertain.

#### I. Groups 15 and 19: Thousand Buddha Panel Paintings

Group 15 consists of a large, rectangular, constructed clay wall on the floor of the cave. At one end it is attached to the clay wall of Group 16 on the West Wall (Fig. 4.1b). The back side more or less faces the Group 6 niche, but because of the curvature of the North Wall, the panel becomes virtually perpendicular to Groups 7 and 9. Its long front side faces towards the opening of the cave. The panel measures H. 3.5 m, W. 4.78 m, and depth 50 cm (11½ x 15½ x 1½ ft.). The front face is painted with the thousand Buddha images in about 54 horizontal rows on a white ground (Fig. 7.58a).<sup>164</sup> The lower part is worn out. There are later inscriptions dated K'ai-huang 開皇 18<sup>th</sup> year (598 A.D.) and Chia-ching 嘉靖 31<sup>st</sup> year (1552).<sup>165</sup>

The Buddhas are seated dhyanāsana on a two-toned circular lotus seat with a mandorla and canopy above (Fig. 7.58b). The images have a scheme of alternating colors for the pedestal, mandorla and Buddha robe, so that the overall effect viewed from a distance is one of diagonal color lines or rays (Fig. 7.58a). This is different from the thousand Buddha panel of Group 24 on the East Wall, discussed above as dating ca. 400, which did not pay attention to a particular alternating color arrangement to produce this kind of effect. Such regularized patterning of color is known in other sites in Kansu, in the thousand Buddha patterns of the Turfan area, and is well-known to be standard in the Tun-huang caves from the time of Cave 272 onwards.<sup>166</sup>

The Buddhas are proportioned with a relatively short leg width, a relatively tall torso and small head. The saṅghāṭī on each image covers both shoulders and none use the sling mode of wearing. The drapery fold lines are best seen in the figures with a light (clay color) robe with black lines. In these it can be seen that the fold patterns are not totally regular parallel patterns, but are relatively broken

<sup>163</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang places the cave within the 428-431 period. Teng (1994), p. 21.

<sup>164</sup> Teng (1994), p. 8.

<sup>165</sup> Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 12.

<sup>166</sup> These will all be studied in more detail in Vol. IV.

patterns and some have a “fish hook” form or double-back squiggle form. Such kind of motifs are seen in the wall paintings of Kizil Cave 212 (Cave of the Seafarers), dated to ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Vol. II.<sup>167</sup> Some of the folds are split, like a curved, narrow Y shape, a type of linear patterning seen in the paintings of the female donors of Group 6 (such as in the sleeves of no.7 in Fig. 7.13b). These lively linear patterns impart some active and slightly fancy aura to the painting of the thousand Buddhas in the Group 15 panel. There is no usage of the two-toned color modeling technique, but there is apparently usage of occasional white lines, such as around the neck cowl fold (which is quite low) on the Buddhas with red robes, or around the outer edge of at least some of the small circular head halos. The painting style is different from that used in the Groups 11, 12, 13, and 14 wall paintings, but is somewhat closer to the Group 6 painting styles.

The circular lotus pedestals are all two tones of color wash (black and white or green and white), and the lotus petal form is drawn in. The pattern of the lotus is in two rows and the petals of the upper row have a single inner U-shaped line drawn. The mandorlas are comprised of a small head halo and an encompassing oval-shaped mandorla. There are bands of color, but most of them have faded, so the mandorlas look to be a single color. A narrow outer red line rim clearly defines each mandorla. The canopies are all similar, without any alternating color change: a strip of red at the top and a lower band in light yellow with closely spaced vertical black lines indicating the fringe. This kind of canopy form also appears at T'ien-t'i shan Cave 1, which will be discussed in Vol. IV. This canopy is different from others used in the wall paintings of Cave 169 studied heretofore.

The elements shown in this wall painting suggest a date close to 424 and the Group 6 paintings rather than with the paintings of Groups 11, 12, 13 and 14, which is a different painting style.<sup>168</sup> The sophistication of the painting of the Group 15 panel could indicate a link with the styles of South China, like that of the Group 6 wall paintings and also with some elements of Kizil as seen in Cave 212. It is quite a beautiful thousand Buddha painting and affords a marked contrast with the Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddha panel in Figs. 5.4a, 5.4b, 5.5.

The Group 19 thousand Buddha wall painting is an artificial clay panel made at the left (facing) of Group 17 and under the broken overhand of the large triangular outcropping of rock in the center of the West Wall (Figs. 4.1b, 4.2, 4.26a, 7.58c). The panel measures about 2.06 m high, 2.95 m wide and 28 cm thick (6  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 9  $\frac{1}{2}$  x  $\frac{3}{4}$  ft). It is broken at the top left corner. The pattern of the thousand Buddhas covers the front surface, but the lower portion is worn out. There are some black ink inscriptions of later times: Chung-chen 崇禎 11<sup>th</sup> year (1638) and Kang-hsi 康熙 26<sup>th</sup> year (1687).<sup>169</sup> The paintings are more faded than the Group 15 panel, but the Group 19 panel painting seems to have been made about the same time with similar style images.

These two thousand Buddha panels in Cave 169 seem to be a relatively late addition to the cave, perhaps ca. 424 or 425, possibly inspired by the popular thousand Buddha panels appearing in many of the cave temples in central and western Kansu. These two in Cave 169 are, however, distinctive to this cave, and are apparently an inventive manner of adding new images to this unusual cave after most of the suitable or easier surfaces had been used. Both may serve the purpose of easy access for worshippers or meditators for the imagery of the thousand Buddhas, since the Group 24 panel is so high and removed from the floor level. For a discussion of the iconography of the thousand Buddhas, which

<sup>167</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 683 and fig. 4.62d.

<sup>168</sup> Teng Yü-hsiang places both the Group 15 and Group 19 panels in the period at the very end of the Western Ch'in, ca. 428-431 along with the Group 3 niche. Teng (1994), p. 21.

<sup>169</sup> Teng (1994), p. 9; Wei Wen-pin (1994), p. 14.



can be the thousand Buddhas of this eon (Bhadrakalpa) or of the Past eon, or of the Future eon, see Chapter 5, section I.C.

## II. CONCLUSIONS: NORTH WALL

The North Wall sculptures and paintings have quite a wide dating spread and represent most completely in Cave 169 the art of the flourishing period of the Western Ch'in in the 420's, during the height of the reign of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an (412-428). It is during this time that the capital was moved from Chin ch'eng (Lan chou area) to Fu-han (present Lin-hsia), not far from Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 1.2).

Among the earliest images are also those of Group 4 (stone core images), probably ca. 400, and the Group 1 clay sculptures of ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Group 2 clay sculptures are likely to be sometime between 400-420. None of these are major works, perhaps reflecting the conditions of the North Wall, which are difficult. However, with the making of the Group 6 niche and accompanying wall paintings—all dated to 424 as determined by the study here—there is a major watershed and shift in activity to the North Wall, which rapidly develops after that point. In close succession Group 7 (ca. 425) is followed by Group 9 (ca. 425-426). The wall paintings of Group 10 have two layers: the under layer is older, dating ca. 400-410 and the upper layer is likely to date around 420-425. The wall paintings of Group 11 are probably the same time as Group 9 (ca. 425-426) and the wall paintings of Groups 12 and 13 are around this same period, ca. 425. The Group 14 sculptures seem to be ca. 426-428, as are the Group 14 wall paintings. The thousand Buddha panels of Groups 15 and 19 could have been made ca. 425, possibly with Group 19 a little earlier than Group 15. Group 3 is probably ca. 428-430, near the end of the Western Ch'in. Most activity occurs from 425-430 on this wall, which is the central focus of new sculptures and paintings being made at this time in Cave 169.

From the quality of the work, the usage of expensive pigments, and the appearance of high class donors in figural portrayal and in inscriptions, it seems that the patronage shifted in Group 6 in 424, having primarily higher class, secular and official donors along with some monks. Several are known as prominent monks of that time—in particular one foreign master (T'an-ma-pi) and one Chinese monk (Tao-jung). This is different from the earlier inscription remaining with the East Wall thousand Buddha panel of Group 24, which lists only monk names and does not show the portrait images. The Group 6 niche also seems to mark the presence of what can be considered high level skillful artists, who were even mentioned in the main inscription as "master artists." The sculptures and paintings of Group 6 are recognizably different in style from those of Groups 7-14 and are probably connected to the styles of the South, whereas those of Groups 7-14 have many characteristics that are related to local artistic traditions with more evident Central Asian and Western traits. As discussed above, elements suggest that the Group 6 paintings and sculpture, which represent a pivotal point, may have been executed by master artists trained in the techniques of painting as known in South China. However, some of the wall paintings that follow Group 6 seem to have learned some features from the Group 6 style, though not executed in the same manner but in a manner associated with the local painting traditions as known from the Wei-Chin wall paintings and other painting from central and western Kansu. There is a noticeable increase in the usage of expensive pigments of malachite green and lapis lazuli blue. New elements in the North Wall groups include the appearance of the "portrait" figures of the donors and individual colophon inscriptions with each donor. The sculptures and paintings around Group 3 show a later stage, probably near the end of the Western Ch'in, ca. 430, where there is a new injection



of naturalism, but less quality of Chinese artistic beauty in favor of a more foreign interpretation that can also be seen in the art of central and western Kansu at this time.

There are also some important new icons as well as some that continue from earlier usage, such as the examples of the Chapter 11 scene of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the seven jewel stupa from the Lotus Sutra. In the North Wall images we witness more emphasis on three Buddhas (standing or sitting), probably the Buddhas of the Three Times, and the notable appearance of Amitāyus Buddha and his two great Bodhisattvas. Paintings include scenes identifiable with certain sutras, such as the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the *Hua-yen ching*, the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Vimalakirti-nirdeśa*, all of which, except the *Lotus Sutra*, are the earliest known identifiable surviving examples in Chinese art. Further, there are sets of Buddhas, including the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. The five Buddhas occur earlier in Cave 169, in Groups 16, 23, and 20, but the example in painting in Group 12 offers a significant new way of presentation that has major ramifications for the study of iconography, as will be taken up in Chapter 8 below.

Finally, this study offers several major results regarding important issues surrounding Group 6: the identity of the textual basis for the Group 6 imagery, and the problem of the reading of the date of the main inscription for Group 6. According to the thesis presented here, the Group 6 sculptures most reasonably accord with the *Wu-liang-shou ching* translation of the *Sukhāvatīyūha Sūtra* that is generally considered to have been done by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün and put out in 421. In that case, the 421 date supports the *tz'u* date of 424 rather than the *nien hao* date of Chien-hung 1<sup>st</sup> year (420, 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day) for the main inscription of Group 6. Further, the Group 6 wall paintings contain the Buddhas of the ten-directions whose colophons follow the names in the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* translated by Buddhahadra. According to early records, the translation was completed in 420 (6<sup>th</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day) and the collation/revision was completed in 422 (12<sup>th</sup> month, 28<sup>th</sup> day). The *tz'u* date of 424 supports both the translation completion date of 420 and the collation/revision completion date of 422 of the *Hua-yen ching*. However, neither the 420 (6<sup>th</sup> month 10<sup>th</sup> day) translation completion date nor the 422 (12<sup>th</sup> month, 28<sup>th</sup> day) collation/revision completion date can support the *nien-hao* date of 420 (3<sup>rd</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day) for the Group 6 niche. Thus the 424 *tz'u* date is considered the accurate date for Group 6, one of the most important Buddhist sculptures and paintings in the history of the Buddhist art of China and the earliest surviving and nearly perfect representation of Amitāyus Buddha and his two great Bodhisattvas in East Asia.

### III. THE CAVE AT YEH-CHI KOU 野鷄溝 (WILD PHEASANT GULCH)

About one *li* from the site of the “lower temple” there is a natural cave with some wall paintings (Fig. 7.59). It is reached by going some 300m north from the colossal Buddha at Cave 169 and then turning west and following the narrow passage between the sides of the steep mountain cliffs and then going about another 200m to the high cliff of the mountain. It was evidently a remote place for meditation. Only a few wall paintings currently remain. An area of about one square meter on the east side of the northern wall shows rows of seated dhyānāsana Buddhas, probably part of a thousand Buddha representation, as well as a few seated Bodhisattvas (Figs. 7.60a, b).

Each figure is given ample space. They are painted on a white ground, using mostly malachite green, dark red, black and white and clay color yellow. There is some alternation of color scheme in the

various parts. The images are all dhyānāsana seated on a circular lotus pedestal. The mandorla is quite plain with a solid color body and head halo, each of a different color. A narrow black line outlines the outer edge of each. The canopy is a simple oval shape, as though seen from below. A similar type canopy appears in the thousand Buddhas of the Group 24 East Wall thousand Buddhas in Cave 169, which has been dated here to ca. 400. Though they have this form in common, the Yeh-chi kou paintings are stylistically different: bolder with the line drawing, more varied in color scheme and more sophisticated in the patterning of the alternating colors. The Yeh-chi kou paintings are in the Cave 169 painting tradition, but more developed from the early paintings of Group 24. The faces, crown of the Bodhisattvas and technique of drawing the robes is very close to the style of painting used in Cave 169 wall paintings of Groups 11, 12, 13 and 14, though they are a little more abbreviated and use more emphasis on the band-like effects of the robe edges. They are also simpler than the thousand Buddhas of the Group 15 and 19 panels. They have a bold quality and retain a sense of vigor and freshness. Probably these date near the end of the Western Ch'in, ca. 425-430.<sup>170</sup> There are several other wall paintings in the cave of good quality stylistically dating to the late Northern Wei.<sup>171</sup>

#### IV. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS: PING-LING SSU UNDER THE WESTERN CH'IN

From the extensive analyses of the individual works presented above, the dating of the early Buddhist sculptures and paintings at Ping-ling ssu, including Niche No. 1, Cave 169, and the Yeh-chi kou cave, appears to fall quite naturally into three periods as presented in the summary chronology below. For the exact reasoning behind the dating, attribution of sources, and iconography, the reader is referred to the analysis presented for each specific sculpture and painting detailed in the studies above.

##### A. *Earliest Period: ca. 375-ca. 400*

The oldest surviving image is the standing Buddha of Niche No.1 (Fig. 3.9), probably dating ca. 375-380, during the period of the Former Ch'in and Eastern Chin. It was located in a cliff niche near the entrance to Ping-ling ssu and seems originally to have been the sole image of the niche, probably Śākyamuni Buddha. It is an exceedingly important sculpture of near colossal size and remains as the earliest surviving colossal image in Chinese Buddhist art. Its value is augmented by its superb quality and the insight that it affords for understanding the visual component of early Chinese Buddhism. Whereas we have written accounts of the great images produced in the South in the 4<sup>th</sup> century under the Eastern Chin and by such famous early masters as Tao-an, none appear to have survived. This Niche No. 1 Buddha stands as an actual original work of that time that surely reflects the styles of the great imagery of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in China. It may reflect some of the elements of the so-called "King Aśoka" Buddha image that was popular in the South; also it has elements that relate to the Eastern Great Buddha of Bāmiyān and as such helps to date that important colossal image. Overall, however, though it shows definite stylistic traits of Gandhāra and Central Asia, it stands as a new interpretation that has the Chinese artistic aesthetic, finely revealing the Chinese version of the

<sup>170</sup> Teng (1994), pp.15-16, text with explanation of plates 57-59 by Teng *et al*, where these paintings are dated to the Western Ch'in period and recognized as being close to the seated Buddha on the bottom outside of the Group 12 wall paintings (probably Fig. 7.44b).

<sup>171</sup> Teng (1994), color pls. 60-62.

Buddha image as it was interpreted in the early days of Buddhism in China. Its importance can hardly be overstated with respect to understanding Chinese Buddhist art, and to glimpse the impact that Buddhism was having in that country in the period when it was becoming a vital part of Chinese culture.

Activity appears to begin in the large natural Cave 169 with the stone core images of Group 18 (Fig. 4.4) on the West Wall (at the rear of the cave), ca. 385-400 period, at the beginning of the Western Ch'in (385-431), ruled by the Ch'i-fu family of Hsien-pi origins. In this period the stone core seated Buddha image of Group 23 (Fig. 5.20) on the South Wall and the three standing stone core Buddhas of Group 4 (Fig. 6.6) on the North Wall were probably also made. The Group 17 large triad images—now comprised of only a superb Bodhisattva sculpture still surviving made with the wood and clay technique (4.25, 4.26a), which became the preferred technique thereafter in Cave 169—can also be considered to date in this period, probably slightly later than Group 18. Group 1 at the upper reaches of the North Wall (Fig. 6.3), and the Group 16 images (including the Contemplative Bodhisattva, the two standing Buddhas (original form) and the five stone core seated Buddhas) are probably around 400 (Figs. 4.40, 4.49, 4.38). These comprise the earliest groups of images in Cave 169 and are mainly situated on the West Wall, which is the main wall of the cave.

The iconographic programs include an impressive grouping of the ten-direction Buddhas (at the highest location on the West Wall) together with a large standing Buddha, a grouping which was discussed here as being Śākyamuni and his “transformed bodies” from the ten-directions of space as dramatically detailed in Chapter 11 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*). It was shown how this spectacular relief probably refers to the *Cheng fa-hua ching*, Dharmarakṣa's Chinese translation (in 286) of the *Lotus Sutra*. Others reveal the early appearance of the triad of standing Buddha with two standing Bodhisattvas (as the important middle zone on the West Wall) in Group 17, the earliest surviving Contemplative Bodhisattva (small in size but prominently positioned) in Group 16, a set of the five dhyānāsana Buddhas (small, but directly in front of the Group 17 main triad) which is the earliest of four sets of the five Buddhas in Cave 169, a single seated dhyānāsana Buddha high on the South Wall in Group 23, and a set of three Buddhas (probably the Buddhas of the Three Times—Past, Present and Future) of Group 4 in the middle zone of the North Wall. The two standing Buddhas of Group 16 may also have been originally a set of the three Buddhas.

The images from this group, which fill out the main West Wall and are generally in quite high positions on both the South and North Walls, provide much needed evidences by which to date other works from sites in Kansu of this period, which is otherwise exceedingly difficult to understand. These images also provide the earliest known, relatively large Contemplative Bodhisattva sculpture and large standing Bodhisattva sculpture. The large standing Buddha of Group 18 provides significant features which help to understand the evolution of the Buddha image style in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, which, combined with the Niche No.1 Buddha, is important in working out the developments and changes in the representation of the Buddha image around the turn of the century when Buddhism was making great strides in the major centers of China in the South and in Ch'ang-an, which revived after the hiatus accompanying the collapse of the Former Ch'in in the late 380's.

The earliest known surviving painting of the thousand Buddhas in China is the one on the East Wall of Cave 169 (Group 24), probably painted ca. 400 or a little later (Figs. 5.4a, 5.4b). It represents an early work in a theme which continues in Cave 169 and is a fundamental component of Chinese Buddhist art thereafter. It reinforces the stamp of Mahāyāna thought that dominates the imagery of this cave. Because of the three individual panels imbedded within the thousand Buddhas, this whole panel is

probably related to the *Lotus Sutra* text, which was first translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 286 A.D. and re-translated by Kumārajīva in 406 A.D. in Ch'ang-an. The inscription accompanying this panel is an important record for this cave. It lists the donors of the panel as bhikṣus and provides their names, one of which is Tao-jung, whose biography, according to the study presented here, helps to establish the dating of this important panel to ca. 400 or slightly later. It is from this panel that elements of a painting style of ca. 400 in the Western Ch'in can be established.

The rulers of the Western Ch'in were strongly Buddhist and the founder, Ch'i-fu Kuo-jen (r. 385-388) as well as his successor Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei (388-412) respected and supported the monk Sheng-chien in the period ca. 389-406. It is likely that these early works in Cave 169 were done during those years, though not directly by the ruling family. Rather, as is made clear in the East Wall inscription, the donors appear to be monks who collectively supported the making of the images in the cave, probably for the purposes of meditation, for which this site is famous at this time, along with Mai-chi shan.

#### B. Middle Period: ca. 400-420

It appears that major work shifted primarily to the South Wall around 400 and continued up to ca. 420. The remains on this wall have a consistency that suggests a concerted effort to follow a plan of presentation, as seems to have been the case with the West Wall as well. Shortly following the making of the early phase stone core seated Buddha of Group 23 high on the wall near the entrance, the paintings of Group 23 and the five seated clay Buddha sculptures of that group were likely to have been made, though the presence of the "Ping-shen" cyclic inscription (*nien-hao* date is missing) complicates the understanding of this particular group of five dhyānāsana Buddhas. As detailed in the specific discussion for this group, the Ping-shen date is a repair date which, according to its own words, strived to keep the "original form." According to Teng Yü-hsiang, the repair seems to have taken place not long after the original images were made and that very little change occurred to the images. He suggests that the Ping-shen repair date is likely to have been 453, following the Northern Wei persecution of Buddhism from 446-452. Though there is some complication with the group of five Buddhas, it would seem clear that the superb three Buddhas on the eastern side of the group were originally made early in the middle period, ca. 400-410 (Figs. 5.30a, 5.33). The two seated Buddhas on the western side of Group 23 are difficult to assess, but were added later than the three Buddhas to the east, as ascertained from technical examination of the joining of the mandorlas (Figs. 5.30a, 5.39). Though they are stylistically different and clearly made by a different artist, they do not appear to have been made much later, perhaps ca. 410-415.

The Group 22 triad of standing Buddha and two standing Bodhisattvas (only one remains) is a high quality image (Fig. 5.45, 5.53), probably dating slightly later than the Buddhas of Group 23, that is, probably dating ca. 415. Groups 21 and 20 (Fig. 5.55) follow shortly after Group 22, probably ca. 415-420, around the time that the capital of the Western Ch'in moved to Fu-han near Ping-ling ssu in 412 A.D. The Buddhas of Group 2 on the North Wall probably also belong to this period, ca. 400-420, and the under (earlier) layer of the Group 10 wall paintings of the North Wall is probably ca. 400 or a little earlier (Fig. 7.27b). The Group 10 earlier painting has part of the seated Buddha labeled as Shih-chia wen fo, an early form of writing Śākyamuni's name in Chinese (prior to Kumārajīva's 406 translation of the *Lotus Sutra* using Shih-chia-mou-ni-fo), and a seated Bodhisattva labeled as Mañjuśrī (Wen-shu-shih-li). These could have been related to the *Lotus Sutra*, where, at the outset of the sutra, in the introduction section, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya Bodhisattvas discuss the miraculous sight of Śākyamuni Buddha in meditation.

The South Wall offers iconographic themes that appear to revolve around the sets of five Buddhas, and perhaps other sets, such as the seven Buddhas, and at least one triad (possibly there were more) of a Buddha with two attendant Bodhisattvas, all represented in clay sculptures. The rare depiction of a row of painted stupas at the top of the South Wall (now largely ruined) in Group 23 may represent the eight stupas of Śākyamuni's relics, or perhaps stand for the seven Buddhas of the past, a representation which is known in the earliest Buddhist art in India (especially well known in the carvings at Sāñcī of ca. 50 B.C.). The Group 23 stupas are painted in the style of Central Asian stupas with square base and slightly cylindrical dome and they have the interesting usage of the auspicious "W" symbol for the chattras (umbrellas). These are evidences that perhaps some of the early stupas of this region of Kansu may have been made in this style rather than in the Chinese style of the storied stupa with eaves (Figs. 5.22, 5.23).

The imagery from this period is of high artistic quality and again is instrumental in affording the evidences for helping to date other works in Kansu, as will become clear in Volume IV of this series. The works from this middle phase do not include any dates or inscriptions other than the Ping-shen repair inscription, but they do reveal the amplification of certain styles and motifs, such as the development of the elements of the mandorla designs and the bold refinements and variations in the style of sculptural forms. The sculptures show a consistency of style that suggests a development within the local region and one that is quite dependent on the modes of sculpture known in Central Asia at such sites as Rawak (Khotan), Tumshuk and Kucha. The presence of the ascetic Buddha of Group 20 (Fig. 5.62) is a rare depiction in China of this time, and specifically reflects some of the modes of the art of the Kucha region. Group 20, along with the five Buddhas of Group 23, apparently presents another example of the set of five Buddhas in Cave 169, an iconography that is consequential for Chinese Buddhist art, but will also engage us further as one of the important contributions in early Chinese Buddhist art that informs the study of Gandhāran art.

### C. Late Period: ca. 420–431

The late period in Cave 169 is dominated by the sculptures and paintings of the middle and lower levels of the North Wall area. The date of 424, the *tz'u* date (rather than 420, the *nien-hao* date) of the main inscription of Group 6, a major landmark in Chinese Buddhist art, is shown to be the most acceptable date for this important niche with its superbly rendered and well preserved clay sculptures of Amitāyus Buddha and his two great Bodhisattvas, Kuan-shih-yin (Avalokiteśvara) and Te-ta-shih-chih (Mahāsthāmaprāpta), all of which are inscribed. They are studied here in relation to the various translations of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* into Chinese and are shown here to clearly relate to the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360), probably translated by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün and put out in Chien-k'ang in the South in 421 A.D. Stylistically, the sculptures and paintings of Group 6 show the infusion of artistic styles of sculpture and painting that probably came from outside the local area, most likely influenced by South China. The wall paintings of Group 6 include a group of the ten-direction Buddhas, each named in colophons according to their direction, and a large standing image of Śākyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Bodhisattva, also named by colophons, as well as the remains of a "reborn being" and a celestial guardian (T'ien-wang). The ten-direction Buddhas match the names from the 60-chüan text of the *Hua-yen ching* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*) translated by Buddhahadra in Chien-k'ang (translation completed in 420; collation/revision completed in 422). The Group 6 wall paintings also include the depiction of the donors, who are officials of the Western Ch'in from the main cities under Western Ch'in control (Nan-an, Chin



ch'eng and T'ien-shui) and their family members and attendants, all led by monks. Among those whose names still survive is the famous foreign dhyāna master T'an-ma-pi and the Chinese monk Tao-jung. Both monks are known from the records in the *Kao-seng chuan*. In a very interesting case, Tao-jung was also one of the donors of the thousand Buddha panel of the East Wall of Cave 169 from ca. 400. A close reading of his biography together with the inscriptions of Group 24 and Group 6 leads one to understand that Tao-jung was probably at Cave 169 as a young monk in meditation practice before he joined the translation team headed by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an, probably sometime around 405, where he distinguished himself as a teacher and debater. After the death of Kumārajīva and the fall of Ch'ang-an in 418, it appears that Tao-jung returned to Western Ch'in and accompanied T'an-ma-pi and some high ranking followers in the donation of the Group 6 imagery before he left for the South, where he is known to have taught and written theoretical commentaries on various texts until his death at age 74 (see translation of Tao-jung's biography in Chapter 5).

Besides the iconographic elements and the different stylistic trends observable in the Group 6 images, there are numerous details which comprise new elements, such as the different designs in the mandorla, which incorporate the celestial musicians, vine patterns (probably of early Gupta influence), and the extremely interesting and complex flame patterns on the upper rim of the Amitāyus mandorla. The drawing of the Śākyamuni and Maitreya painting show elements of refinement and motifs such as the split scarves of the Maitreya Bodhisattva and the tribhaṅga posture of the Buddha. This rather elegant manner of portrayal appears to be more indigenous than foreign. However, there are elements related to Central Asian paintings, such as seen in the depiction of the monks' faces with the green pigment used for the shading of the beard. This mode appears to follow the technique of monk portrayals in the wall paintings of Kizil, such as seen in Cave 48 of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Such motifs related to the painting modes of Kucha seem to have been incorporated into the repertoire which is dominantly Chinese, possibly mostly as related to developments in the South under the Eastern Chin, which may well have received some influences from Central Asia, such as from the famous paintings of the Kucha area, especially Kizil. The garments of the female donors reveal the specific style of South China as known through the paintings of Ku K'ai-chih. Similarly, the robes of the male figures show the Han Chinese mode, but some wear the headgear of the Hsien-pi ethnic origins of the Ch'i-fu clan. These elements of dress reflect the influences of Han Chinese styles of the Eastern Chin in the South and appear to have been incorporated into the high culture of the Western Ch'in by 424, the period of the peak of Western Ch'in power under Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, the most successful ruler of the Western Ch'in. Clearly movements in the South were impacting this area of Kansu in the 420's, perhaps because of the flight of some upper class people to this area around the end of the Eastern Chin and beginning of [Liu] Sung. Be that as it may, new ideas and elements of Han culture and governance came to Western Ch'in as specifically evidenced in the Group 6 paintings and sculptures.

Group 7 appears to follow Group 6 within a few years (ca. 425) and retains a high quality of sculpture and painting (as seen in the mandorla, which, though related to the Group 6 mandorlas, is more elaborated with some new elements). The best preserved of the Group 7 clay figures (originally possibly the Buddhas of the Three Times) is one of the finest of the Buddha images from Cave 169. It has a sense of heroic power and coherent patterning of varied drapery folds that seem to find some of their origins in the art of the early Gupta period Buddhas of India. The three Buddhas of Group 9, also likely to be the Buddhas of the Three Times, though different stylistically from those of Group 7 (and the right two are a different style from the one at the left), nevertheless show some links which suggest a close but slightly later dating, also perhaps ca. 425. Again the mandorla designs are useful in apprehending



the evolution of the designs from the Group 6 to Group 7 and to Group 9 examples, as each seems to connect in some ways with the previous examples and yet to have added some new motifs.

The wall paintings of Group 10 (upper [later] layer), 11, 12, 13 and 14 appear to all belong to the time close to, but following, the works of Groups 6, 7 and 9, probably ca. 425-428 period, which was still a very prosperous time for the Western Ch'in, prior to the devastating earthquake of 429 and the ensuing disasters that led to the demise of the Western Ch'in under Ch'i-fu Mu-mo from 428 to 433. The painting style of most of the images in these groups uses pronounced white highlights to indicate raised areas, such as across the top of the eyebrows, down the nose bridge and on the eyelids and chin as well as part of the fleshy folds of the neck. All the paintings of these groups, unlike those of Group 6, are similar in their bold linear technique. They continue the system depicting the images of the donors as first seen in Group 6. Group 11 has the first major appearance of lapis lazuli blue pigments among the surviving wall paintings of Cave 169. This suggests a certain economic prosperity in the region, since this pigment was expensive and had to be imported. The paintings have stylistic links with the paintings of GK Cave 21 at Kumtura in Kucha. The painting style of Groups 11, 12 and 13, which are contiguous along the lower part of the North Wall (Fig. 7.26) is not as elegant as that of the Group 6 wall paintings, but is rather more closely associated with the painting styles of the Kansu region and North China, so the artist(s) of these groups are likely to have been trained more locally as compared with the artist(s) of the Group 6 wall paintings, which, as we have suggested, possibly were invited from outside the local area, perhaps South China or the Szechwan area.

The paintings of these groups are arranged like panels or hanging paintings on the wall (a compositional form also used later at Yün-kang). This kind of composition is hard to evaluate in terms of its origins, but the Cave 169 examples in Groups 11, 12, and 13 would certainly be counted among the early surviving examples in China. Various discrete portions appear to represent separate iconographic elements without any particular iconographic relationship to each other. In these North Wall paintings, the *Lotus Sutra* remains a major component with two depictions of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the seven jewel stupa. Others include the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*. Group 6 also may have included images related to the Medicine Buddha (Yao-wang fo) and the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*. One interesting portrayal suggested here is the appearance of the discrete group of the five Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa (with four Buddhas and a cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva) in part of Group 12 that seems to also have rows of multiple Buddhas above the main Buddha. This representation of the five Buddhas is different from the other three in other parts of Cave 169 (Groups 16, 23 and 20) and is an important evidence in the investigation into the set of five Buddhas undertaken in Chapter 8, the consequences of which will shed some light on this iconography in the art of Gandhāra and also with regard to the identity of the five colossal Buddhas of the T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang in the 460's under the Northern Wei.

With the translations of Kumārajīva, Buddhaghosa, Dharmakṣema and others in the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, China became richly endowed with Mahāyāna texts which sealed the Mahāyāna path of Chinese Buddhism and ensured the viability of Mahāyāna in East Asia. This is a major factor in the history of East Asian Buddhism. The art of Cave 169 clearly reveals some of the steps accompanying this great moment of Mahāyāna translations in China. This will reach greater culmination levels in the future, especially with the monumental success of the cave temples at Yün-kang. However, in some ways, Cave 169 represents the early beginnings of this movement towards Yün-kang, a movement which still had to endure setbacks such as conquest of Kansu by the Northern Wei in 439 and

the Buddhist persecution of 446-452, both of which contributed to the possibility of such a feat as Yün-kang being accomplished.

Group 14 is interesting as it has not only some sculptures and wall paintings, but also a written sutra text. The paintings are still in the style of the Group 11, 12 and 13 paintings, but they are a little more abbreviated and done in a swift, simplified and even bolder manner that suggests familiarity with a technique. For this reason they would appear to date a little later than the Group 11, 12 and 13 paintings, though certainly not by much. The same is true of the sculptures, which would appear to be the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present and Future) in seated form. They are somewhat coarser than the sculptures of Groups 7 and 9 and show a tendency towards simplification and heaviness in their style. Certain elements interestingly relate to the images in some of the stone stupas of Liang chou found in Chiu-ch'üan and Tun-huang. This factor helps to suggest a dating around 425-428 for the Group 14 sculptures and paintings. The mandorlas show some of the same elements as the mandorlas of Group 9 sculptures (such as the twisted rope design and colored dots in the pearls), but also have some new features, such as the fuller vine rinceau.

Above the niche of the three Buddhas is written a sutra text in black ink. It is the *Fo-shuo wei-ts'eng-yu ching*, translated in the Later Han period (translator unknown). It speaks of the benefit of making stupas, dedicating banners and making images and is a text in praise of the Buddha. That this short sutra was chosen to write on the wall, probably around 425-428, would indicate the desire to stress the activities of making Buddhist images and stupas as beneficial in mysterious ways consonant with the rare teachings of the Buddha. What is so important in this case is that this is one of the oldest surviving hand-written original Buddhist texts still surviving from the early years of Buddhism in China, datable to ca. 425-428. A few others survive in stone, as in the stone stupas of Liang chou, and a few fragments on paper are known from Turfan and Tun-huang, but this, to my knowledge, is the among the oldest and the only one to survive from the walls of a cave.

The thousand Buddha clay wall panels of Group 15 and 19 were likely to have been made ca. 425. They are distinctly different from the thousand Buddha panel of the East Wall Group 24, which does not utilize the schematic alternation of colors of the canopies, mandorlas, Buddha's robes and lotus pedestals which are employed with delicacy and precision in both the Group 15 and 19 panels. These show a sophistication that comes with the development of the formula for portrayal of the thousand Buddhas in painting, which seems to have occurred sometime between ca. 400 and ca. 420's. The few remaining early wall paintings in the cave at Yeh-chi kou, about one *li* from the Cave 169 area of Ping-ling ssu, are stylistically close to those of Group 13 and 14, so they were probably done around 425-428. The Group 3 niche on the middle zone of the North Wall is probably the last of the early works in Cave 169. Only a few sculptures were made in the late Northern Wei and a few wall paintings in the T'ang period, which marks the end of work in this cave.

Group 3 is large and has some powerful clay sculptures. They are more massive in style than the earlier sculptures and approach the interest in the solidity of form which begins to appear in the 430's and 440's as seen in the Liang chou stone stupas and in Cave 275 at Tun-huang. The presence of Vajrapāṇi and the new motif of the honeysuckle vine rinceau painted on the bottom front edge of the niche are features that are known by the 430's in other sites in Kansu. The style of the painting is different, and not related to the Group 11, 12, 13 and 14 painting style, which suggests differences of hand and also probably of time. Though it is unlikely that work took place in Cave 169 during the difficult years between 428-431 at the end of the Western Ch'in, it is possible that the Group 3 niche could have been made later in the 430's when this area was under the control of the Northern Wei. It is again unlikely

to have been made during the period of the Northern Wei Buddhist persecution of 446-452, and the style of the images does not seem to accord with the style of the 450's and later.

With the array of wall paintings in Cave 169, the paintings present a chronology that shows a persistent regional artistic style, probably associated with Kansu, and the introduction of an artistic style that probably comes from the South in 424 and exerts some changes in the local Kansu painterly style. These changes are only primarily in terms of form, not in terms of brushwork and refinement of brush technique. The links which the Cave 169 wall paintings have with paintings of other sites in Kansu can now be used with some degree of certainty, and so Cave 169 becomes crucial to provide a chronological framework with which to link other works of the Kansu region.

Because of the variety within the various individual sculptures, they were clearly executed over a period of time in this cave. Yet there is a general coherence to the style, so the periods of separation between each would not have been too long. Over the course of the decades of the Western Ch'in work may have proceeded at a more or less steady pace, with apparently major activity during the initial stages, a middle period, possibly during the reigns of Ch'i-fu Ch'ien-kuei, and the beginning of that of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an, both of whom are known to have encouraged Buddhism and who invited famous monks to his capital. Such famous monks as Fa-hsien, Hsüan-kao, T'an-ma-pi (T'an-ma-mi-t'o), and Tao-jung are known to have come to Western Ch'in and undoubtedly came to Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, a famous meditation cave of the time.

Work appears to have started at the top of the cave, which may indicate that there was a general scheme of some sort. The scheme is apparently based on a grand Mahāyāna cosmology which appears to have been linked to the *Lotus Sutra* and incorporated such elements as sets of Buddhas. Later, however, especially after 424, there was a notable expansion of textual basis, including the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the *Hua-yen ching*, and the *Vimalakirti-nirdeśa* as well as the *Lotus Sutra*, which seems to consistently have been popular in Cave 169. There appears to have been interest in texts related to the Medicine Buddha and possibly the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou fo ching*. The appearance of the five Buddhas in four occurrences (Groups 16, 23, 20 and 12) is especially interesting and will be pursued in more detail in Chapter 8 below. The variety and scope of the icons is actually dazzling: the seven stupas, ten-direction Buddhas, thousand Buddhas, five Buddhas, triads of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, Maitreya Bodhisattva, Shakyamuni, Vimalakirti and three representations of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna—all representing quite a developed Mahāyāna pantheon.

The South Wall gives the impression of the most orderly composition in horizontal zones; the West Wall seems to have basically two major groupings, but the North Wall has a scattered appearance of isolated independent, discrete and mostly unrelated groups, probably commissioned by individual donors, mainly over the period from ca. 420-430. Whereas the East Wall has the remaining early thousand Buddha panel, the South Wall appears to center on the iconographic themes of stupas and rows of sets of Buddhas, including the five Buddhas and at least one triad. The West Wall has the main standing Buddha surrounded by ten Buddhas and a large standing Buddha triad niche below, a contemplative Bodhisattva, the five Buddhas, and two (possibly three) standing Buddhas. The North Wall seems to focus most on a variety of triads in sculpture and wall paintings that depict certain sutras and portray the donor figures.

As will become evident from further studies presented in Vol. IV of the Buddhist art from the Sixteen Kingdoms period in central and western Kansu, the Buddhist art of the Western Ch'in as seen in Cave 169 follows a generally different path indicative of different texts, sources, interests, and artists. Cave 169 appears to have considerable contact with South China, though there is some indication of

artistic elements linked to Central Asia—but this may also be the case with South China as well, as virtually everything in Chinese Buddhist art of this early period can be influenced by Central Asian forms, especially from the major sites, such as Kucha and Khotan. Also, we unfortunately do not know much about the art from the Ch'ang-an region because of the devastating wars from ca. 416-424. Artists from Ch'ang-an may have come from Ch'ang-an following the collapse of the Later Ch'in from 416-418, but there is little on which to base for an assessment at this time.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE FIVE BUDDHAS AND SETS OF MULTIPLE BUDDHAS IN THE ART OF GANDHĀRA AND AFGHANISTAN AND THEIR RELATION TO CAVE 169 AT PING-LING SSU AND THE FIVE T'AN-YAO CAVES AT YÜN-KANG

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Many of the early Chinese translations of Buddhist texts (from 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. to ca. 425), such as those noted in Chapters 4 and 6, have references to four Buddhas, six Buddhas, seven Buddhas, eight Buddhas, the ten-direction Buddhas, the thirty-five Buddhas, the fifty-three Buddhas, and the thousand Buddhas. The majority of these translated sutras are the texts appearing in greater India from around the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. to the early 5<sup>th</sup> century and are those related primarily to Mahāyāna. If we judge from these texts, as well as from what we see in the early Buddhist art of China of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as we are presently studying in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 and in the early caves at Mai-chi shan, we could expect to see the representation of sets of multiple Buddhas in the art of India and Central Asia. From my investigation, the areas of Gandhāra and Afghanistan stand out prominently as having numerous examples of sets of multiple Buddhas in the surviving art, more than any that appear in the art of India and Central Asia. Because of this, I am presenting here a fresh look at the imagery of the Gandhāran and Afghanistan areas with the intention of uncovering the possible sources for the appearance of the sets of multiple Buddhas that we see in the early Buddhist art of China, with particular emphasis on the configuration of the five Buddhas, which appear in four different configurations in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu dating from the ca. 400-430 period of the Western Ch'in. Further, such sets of multiple Buddhas occur in the art of other Buddhist cave temples in Kansu of the Sixteen Kingdoms period and also in the T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang under the Northern Wei, both of which will continue to be studied in subsequent volumes of this series. Since the difficult issue of the iconography of the five Buddhas has not been solved, it is considered here to be an important issue to pursue, but to do so requires a rather detailed investigation of certain monuments of Gandhāra and Afghanistan, notably the stupas with multiple images that mostly occur in the period from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The biographies of the Chinese pilgrim monks who traveled to Gandhāra, Afghanistan and India, such as Fa-hsien ca. 400-415, T'an-wu-chieh in ca. 420, and others (discussed above in Chapter 1, section II), clearly reveal that "Chi-pin" 罽賓 was a major goal for their pilgrimage, particularly with regard to viewing and worshipping some of the relics of the Buddha that were kept in Chi-pin at that time, which is the period at the center of our study here (Fig. 8.1). From Fa-hsien's account we learn of the following famous sites, all of which were very actively patronized and worshipped when he visited them in ca. 402 A.D.

- 1) The four stupas marking the places of sacrifice by the Bodhisattva in a previous lifetime, all of which were marked by a great stupa noted by Fa-hsien:



- a) where King Śibi offered his flesh in ransom for the dove (at Swat, “a stupa adorned with layers of gold and silver plates”);
  - b) where King Sudhira offered his eyes to a Brahmin (at Taxila, “a large stupa adorned with layers of gold and silver plates”);
  - c) where King Chandraprabha offered his head to a Brahmin (at Taxila, “a large stupa adorned with layers of all precious substances”);<sup>1</sup>
  - d) where Prince Mahāsattva sacrificed his body for the starving tigress and her cubs (at Taxila, “a large stupa adorned with all precious substances”).
- 2) At Peshāwar (Puruṣapura):
- a) Kaniṣka’s great stupa
  - b) the Buddha’s alms bowl (“at a great monastery with a great stupa”).<sup>2</sup>
- 3) At Haḍḍa (Nagarahāra)
- a) Buddha’s projection image (shadow image)
  - b) Buddha’s tooth
  - c) Buddha’s skull (uṣṇīṣa) bone
  - d) Buddha’s staff of ox-head sandalwood with pewter rings at the head
  - e) Stupa made by Buddha and his disciples at the spot where Buddha shaved his head and clipped his nails—this stupa said to have been made as a model for all future stupas
  - f) place where Buddha in a past life purchased the flowers he offered to Dīpaṃkara Buddha
  - g) place having Buddha’s saṅghāṭī.<sup>3</sup>

This list alone shows the importance of the sacred sites in the Gandhāra-Afghanistan region, and Fashien’s remarks provide essential eye-witness comments concerning the flourishing condition and patronage of these sites in the early years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Further, the studies of S. Kuwayama of the designation of Chi-pin based mainly on Chinese records, show that during the period around the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century the designation “Chi-pin” as used by the Chinese pilgrims of that time appears to refer predominantly to the Taxila, Peshawar, and Haḍḍa area, probably also including Swat (Fig. 8.1).<sup>4</sup> Recent work by Li Ch’ung-feng suggests that the route bifurcated after reaching Bolor with one branch going into Kashmir and the other into Swat (called the Darada route) and on to Taxila or Peshawar.<sup>5</sup>

Given these historical circumstances and the known flourishing of Buddhist art in the Gandhāran and Afghanistan regions during this time, it is also reasonable to anticipate that this general area was a primary source for many of the ideas and art forms appearing in China at this time. While the primary goal in this section is to investigate the sources of the five Buddha configuration, other sets of multiple Buddhas will also be addressed, since they are also important and occur in early Chinese

<sup>1</sup> This is believed to be the Bhalla Stupa, a large circular stupa raised up on a high terrace, north of the Haro River near Taxila. See John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, Cambridge, 1960, pl. XXII and pp. 178-179.

<sup>2</sup> Legge (1965), pp. 33-35. Also see Shoshin Kuwayama, “The Buddha’s Bowl in Gandhāra and Relevant Problems,” in M. Taddei (ed.), *South Asian Archaeology 1987*, Rome, 1990, see especially pp. 947-950.

<sup>3</sup> Legge (1965), pp. 35-39.

<sup>4</sup> Shoshin Kuwayama, “Pilgrimage Route Changes and the Decline of Gandhāra”, in Brancaccio and Behrendt (2006), pp. 107-115.

<sup>5</sup> Li Ch’ung-feng, “The Geography of Transmission: The ‘Jibin’ Route and the Propagation of Buddhism in China,” in Kizil, *On the Silk Road*, ed. by R. Ghose, Mumbai, 2008, pp. 25-31.

Buddhist art, including that of Ping-ling ssu and Mai-chi shan discussed in this volume. While this is not an over-all, thorough investigation of the many issues related to the study of Gandhāran art, and most attention is focused on the five Buddha configuration, the data from major monasteries in Taxila, Peshawar, Haḍḍa, Kāpīsī and Bāmiyān will provide a basis for analysis as well as for some hypotheses to emerge with regard to these iconographic issues surrounding some important art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan.

Foucher and Marshall noted years ago that the art of the Pakistan areas of Taxila and the Peshawar Valley is somewhat different from that of the Afghanistan sites, though related. This is indeed the case, and in order to more accurately understand the variations within and also in respect to other sites, Taxila, the Peshawar Valley, Haḍḍa (Nagarahāra), Kāpīsī and Bāmiyān will be treated as distinct regional variants, though they can also be more broadly considered as Gandhāran and Afghan regional schools or even combined as a whole unit frequently called “Greater Gandhāra”. Here, however, it is most informative to discuss the art in the smaller regional units.

To facilitate chronological awareness of the developments, I will generally refer to century-related rather than dynastic-related dates. Since the excavations at Taxila by Sir John Marshall and those from Butkara in Swat by Faccenna and the Italian Team from IsMEO provide two essential sources in dating the architecture as well as the art of Gandhāra, the chronologies put forth by Marshall, Faccenna, and more recently by Behrendt and Fitzsimmons based on their considerations of the masonry types in the constructions of Taxila in particular, will be taken into consideration here.

Sir John Marshall, the excavator of Taxila (from 1912-1936), first laid out the framework of the masonry in terms of the phases of “rubble”, “diaper” and “semi-ashlar”. A summary of these phases and their approximate dates as suggested by Marshall are as follows:

- 1) Rubble (random); rubble (coursed): from 90 B.C. to 20 or 30 A.D.
- 2) Diaper (early, small, fine): 20 or 30 A.D. until last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.
- 3) Diaper (late, large, coarse, rough): first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.
- 4) Semi-ashlar (earlier [limestone + kañjūr]): second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.
- 5) Semi-ashlar (later [large boulders; multiple ashlar courses] and semi-ashlar (decadent): 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- 6) Non-descript: early middle ages.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, Kurt Behrendt in his study of Gandhāran Buddhist architecture uses a “four-phase chronological system” mainly based on the changes in masonry types in conjunction with dates provided by coins and historical data. His system is approximately as follows:

Phase I: ca. 200 B.C. to mid-to-late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

Phase II: ca. mid-to-late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. to ca. 200 A.D.

Phase III: ca. 200 A.D. to 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Phase IV: ca. 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. to 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>7</sup>

With regard to dating the structures of the Taxila region, Fitzsimmons in his 2001 study puts forth a new typology which refines the chronological criteria. He continues to use the markers of

<sup>6</sup> Sir John Marshall, *Taxila*, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1951, I, pp. 160-161 and III, pl. 55. The convenient summary was obtained from T. Fitzsimmons, *Stupa Designs at Taxila*, Kyoto, 2001, p. 105, Table 2.

<sup>7</sup> See Kurt Behrendt, *The Buddhist Architecture of Gandhāra*, Leiden, 2004, Appendix A, pp. 255-267.

construction methods first put forward by Marshall, that is, rubble, diaper and semi-ashlar, but he provides a more nuanced and detailed criteria of change. Fitzsimmons's typology co-ordinates with the masonry categories first established by Marshall as follows:

- Types 1-3 masonry = Marshall's "rubble masonry"
- Types 4-7 masonry = Marshall's "diaper masonry"
- Types 8-11 masonry = Marshall's "semi-ashlar masonry" [Types 8 and 9 being semi ashlar and Type 10 being the beginning of double semi-ashlar]
- Type 12 masonry = not a true semi-ashlar but derives from it.

In providing specific dates for his typology, Fitzsimmons co-ordinates with the dates put forward by the Italian team (Faccenna and Taddei in particular) for the excavations in Swat, mainly at Butkara, and those of Tapa Sardar in Afghanistan (by M. Taddei) and arrives at the following outlines:

- Type 4: existed as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.
- Type 5: perhaps matches with Period 4/1 of the Swat chronology: end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to mid 4<sup>th</sup> century
- Type 6: perhaps matches with Period 4/2 of the Swat chronology: mid-4<sup>th</sup> century
- Types 7 and 8: perhaps not earlier than mid-4<sup>th</sup> century and could stretch to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (with Type 8 possibly surviving the "gap"—a period of neglect and decay followed by one of renewal)
- Types 9-12: probably no earlier than the early part of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup>

Though these excavation studies present an outline and some basis for a chronology, there is frequently about a 100–200 year discrepancy between them and none presents a detailed dating alignment for the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century, which in some respects is the most complex and flourishing period for Gandhāran Buddhist art. In order to untangle the complexities and to hopefully arrive at a more accurate chronological understanding, it is also necessary to engage the sculptural imagery, a task which is on-going. Here we will contribute as much as we can coming from the background of China and Central Asia. While we are primarily engaging the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan in order to search for the iconographic sources of 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist art in China, we will also note, where possible, the dating factors which may be helpful in the continuing discussions surrounding the chronology of Gandhāran art.

## II. Taxila (Gandhāra)

In the Gandhāra region, the area of Taxila has some of the oldest remains of Buddhist structures from at least the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. (possibly earlier), and continuing into the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> At this point in our

<sup>8</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 50–51.

<sup>9</sup> The work of Sir John Marshall in excavating the sites of the Taxila area and his subsequent report of these excavations in his 3-volume book, *Taxila*, still remains the foundation for understanding the monuments of this area. Others, building upon this work and offering some new materials from the Taxila and Peshāwar areas in particular are beginning to add new assessments and new materials which are helping to move the field of Gandhāran art forward. Notably, the excavation work by the Italian teams from IsMEO (Faccenna and Taddei), by Peshāwar University (Dani), and by the Japanese from Kyoto University (Mizuno and Higuchi), as well as recent individual studies by various scholars such as Fitzsimmons, Behrendt, Taddei, Tissot, Cribb, Tanaka, Kurita, Miyaji, Rhi and others are bringing more clarity to this immense, critical area of early Buddhism.

investigation, the focus is limited to considering materials from those monasteries at Taxila which appear to be most fruitful in searching for the possible appearance of sets of multiple Buddhas and therefore to judge specifically whether the five Buddha configuration as a meaningful set may have appeared, and if so, then where, at what juncture, and with what Buddhist meaning and iconographic interpretation, among other factors.

#### A. *Dharmarājikā: Stupas K1, N4 (and J1)*

The Dharmarājikā Monastery complex is the venerable, large monastery of the Taxila region, located southeast of the ancient city of Sirkap and a little further to the south from the city of Sirsukh, which flourished during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fig. 8.2). This monastery probably had its roots in the period of Aśoka and it became famous for its early large, circular main stupa (Fig. 8.3a). Here our attention will focus on the smaller, square base stupas K1 (Fig. 8.3b) and N4 (as well as the early phase of J1) at the Dharmarājikā Stupa site.<sup>10</sup> They are examples that possibly represent an early appearance of the iconography of Buddha images related specifically to the four cardinal directions.<sup>11</sup>

In order to understand the basic issues of the stupa construction in the Taxila area, which is a crucial component in the dating of stupas and their accompanying images (which turn out to be the main sources of the sets of multiple Buddhas), the discussion of Stupas K1 and N4 and the others to follow will necessarily also include some discussion concerning the techniques employed.

According to Marshall's report, Stupas K1 and N4 are constructed of semi-ashlar limestone with soft kañjūr inserted for the pilasters, entablature, base moldings and niches, just as seen in older, diaper masonry structures. Also, in these stupas kañjūr is freely used along with limestone in the face of the wall, thus giving it a patchy appearance (not visible with the plaster surfacing). Further, these two stupas are characterized by bolder terracing of the square plinth (base or podium) than seen in earlier stupas, the pilasters are wider than those of the earlier Śaka period, the "Hindu" brackets are "exceptionally long", and "the brackets of the dentil cornice above the architrave are noticeably deep (Figs. 8.3b, c). The base torus molding, instead of being rounded, was made of kañjūr stone that was beveled in three facets which were then made round by the plaster coating."<sup>12</sup>

Fitzsimmons classifies Stupas K1, N4 (and J1) as "Design H" in his categorization of stupa types. Design H is associated with his Type 9 masonry (semi-ashlar).<sup>13</sup> From his examination of K1, N4

<sup>10</sup> For a view of N4, see Fitzsimmons (2001), fig. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Stupas K1 and N4, which are very similar to each other, are both located north of the Great Stupa. Stupa J1, located near the southern and main entrance to the Great Stupa, is similar in many respect to both K1 and N4, but is larger (32' 4" square at the base) than K1 (27' 8" square at the base) and N4 (similar to K1). Though Stupa J1 was renovated "more than once," parts of the early stupa still survive, enough to indicate to Marshall that J1 originally had three levels and that the drum/dome rose from the top of the third level. "Like K1 and N4, J1 stands on a heavy limestone platform, its square plinth is divided into three diminishing terraces, on the topmost of which once rested the usual drum and dome." Marshall (1951), p. 264. Only two levels survived at the time of Marshall's excavation of both K1 and N4, so it is not known if they originally also had three levels below the drum/dome, similar to Stupa J1, though it would seem to be likely.

<sup>12</sup> With regard to Stupa J1, Marshall notes that the earliest part of J1 is part of the group which dates "from the period immediately following the displacement of diaper by semi-ashlar work—a change which ... seems to have taken place in the latter part of the second century A.D." Marshall (1951), pp. 261-262.

<sup>13</sup> Design H stupa is defined by Fitzsimmons as having a square podium, at least two stories with the perimeter of the upper one diminishing in size in relation to the one below and having no projection or staircase. The podium sits on a basement and the sides of the lower story are divided into an odd number of panels by pilasters with the middle panel highlighted by a decorative niche containing a figure. Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 18.

and J1 Fitzsimmons notes that all have a “basement” (stone slabs extending out from under the foot molding of the podium (also called a plinth or base), a feature that apparently is not present in earlier forms of stupa construction. With regard to the masonry, Fitzsimmons notes that though K1 is “virtually identical” to N4, he suggests that the masonry of K1 appears to be closer to his Type 8 [early semi-ashlar] rather than Type 9 [semi-ashlar], which would indicate a dating in the early phase of semi-ashlar masonry, as also assessed by Marshall, and thus indicating that Stupa K1 could be slightly earlier than Stupa N4.<sup>14</sup>

The relative dating of these three stupas according to Marshall, Behrendt and Fitzsimmons, all of whom seem to generally agree on the basic design and masonry elements and place these stupas in an early semi-ashlar category, depends on their respective interpretations of the relative time for this type of construction. Accordingly, Marshall dates them to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.,<sup>15</sup> Behrendt places them in early Phase III (i.e., ca. early 3<sup>rd</sup> century), and Fitzsimmons dates them with Design H of Type 8 and Type 9 masonry, that is, ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, though he may be indicating a slight sequence of K1, N4 and J1 (early phase).<sup>16</sup> Resolving these discrepancies still remains a primary task regarding the dating of Gandhāran art. It is remarkable that Marshall’s dating attributed the accession of Kaniṣka I to ca. 128,<sup>17</sup> extremely close to the recent settling of the date of the first year of Kaniṣka to 127 A.D. based on the Rabatak inscription. Fitzsimmons tends to rely on the period dating of the Italian scheme for the Butkara and Tapa Sardar excavations, and it is possible that there may need to be some adjustments when considering similar constructions for the Taxila area.

<sup>14</sup> Fitzsimmons notes that “the small areas of original masonry visible in the photo [in *Taxila*, pl. 57a] appear to be different from N4 and closer to Type 8 [early semi-ashlar] masonry.” He classifies the early phase of Stupa J1 as a Design H structure (which he associates with Type 9 [semi-ashlar] masonry), though specifically with regard to the masonry of J1 he notes “the areas of masonry which remain do not indicate a clear type”. Further, he notes for Stupa J1 that: “The foot molding rests on a course of limestone blocks as at N4 and K1, and below is a basement. The foot molding itself is different. It is composed of a beveled torus and, above, two extremely narrow stepped fillets, perhaps as the base for plaster decoration.” He observes that the niche on the west face of Stupa J1 does not recede into the body of the panel as in the case at K1 and N4. Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> He specifically places Stupa J1 in the latter part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. See Marshall (1951), p. 261.

<sup>16</sup> According to Marshall, these stupas belong to the period “immediately following the displacement of diaper by semi-ashlar work,” which he judges to have occurred in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. From the evidences of coins, he suggests a possible refinement of the dating for K1, N4, K2 and K3 as early as the reign of Kaniṣka (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century). Marshall, (1951), I, p. 263.

Behrendt also uses the masonry construction as a dating marker for these stupas and because they use “an early form of semi-ashlar masonry” that “relied on extensive use of kanjur blocks...” he dates them to his early phase III (ca. 200-5<sup>th</sup> century), hence probably ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century. “During this early part of phase III, datable stupas were constructed that have axial image shrines incorporated into the facades of their bases. Stupas K1 and N4, both built of early phase III proto-semi-ashlar masonry, have axial trilobed niches in the center of each face of the bases....The appearance of these image niches is quite significant because they are the earliest iconic devotional images to appear within shrines that can be dated, in this instance by the proto-semi-ashlar-masonry.” Behrendt (2004), pp. 144-145.

Stupas K1, N4 and J1 (early phase) are Design H in Fitzsimmon’s categorization. Salient features are that the “podium” (plinth or base) of the stupa is square, sits on a “basement” and is composed of at least two stories with the perimeter of the upper story smaller in size in relation to the story below. There is no staircase or projection and the sides of the lower story are divided into an odd number of panels by pilasters, the middle panel highlighted by a decorative niche containing a figure (“a trefoil niche partly embedded in the wall”). He associates the Design H stupas with his category of Types 8 and 9 masonry [Marshall and Behrendt’s semi-ashlar]. In comparing K1 and N4, he notes “the small areas of original masonry visible in the photo [of K1] appear to be different from N4 and closer to Type 8 masonry,” thus suggesting a slight precedence in date for K1. Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 18, 26, 71-72.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall (1951), p. 85.

The frieze on the lower level (podium or plinth) in both K1 and N4 has seven bays demarcated by the eight pilasters along each of the four sides (Fig. 8.3b). The central bay on each side has a deep trefoil niche, receding back into the masonry face (Fig. 8.3c).<sup>18</sup> These four recessed niches on each stupa originally contained a stucco image. The niche on the north side of Stupa K1, which was protected, still survived with its stucco Buddha image when Marshall excavated the stupa (Fig. 8.3c). The bays other than the central one on each side apparently had no images as the bays are shallow and the plastered surface still remains in some areas (Fig. 8.3c).<sup>19</sup> Although seven bays on each side is a number which can suggest the seven Buddhas, the fact that there is only one image niche with a sculpture of a Buddha on each side could likely be taken to refer to one Buddha facing each of the four directions. Referents to the four directions (the four cardinal directions of North, East, South and West) as a concept of universality are abundant in early Buddhist art in India, but to see the usage of a seated Buddha image representing this concept at this time is a new step.<sup>20</sup> Stupa J1 (early phase) has 11 bays on each side of the podium, also with the central one being the image niche on each side.<sup>21</sup> Based on the 11-bay configuration at J1, it might appear that seven bays as seen in K1 and N4 have no particular significance, since there is no significance, as far as I know, of the number eleven with regard to sets of Buddhas. So if J1 has no particular meaning attached to the number of bays, possibly K1 and N4 also had no particular meaning inherent in the seven-bay configuration. Possibly at this stage of development (early semi-ashlar period), but not necessarily at a later stage, the main focus is on the central niche on each face of the podium as the important one and that the number of bays simply needed to be an odd number in order to make one central niche (an even number would require two niches to be in the center, as seen in the case of the drum of Mohrā Morādu discussed below). Further, the odd number of bays may have been decided simply by the desired size of the stupa. Considering all these above factors, it seems likely that Stupas K1 and N4 as well as J1 (early phase) in their lower level (podium or plinth) are representing a particular set of four-Buddhas purposely aligned to the four primary directions.

Reference to four Buddhas occurs in Buddhist texts translated into Chinese before ca. 425 in several different ways. It is possible that the set of four Buddhas as used in Buddhist art can be linked to specific Buddhas. One possibility is that the four Buddhas are the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni). They are specifically mentioned as a group of four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa in the opening chapter of the *Dirghāgama*, one of the main Āgamas of the Sarvāstivādins in the Gandhāran region, which was translated into Chinese as the *Ch'ang a-han ching* 長阿含經 in 413 A.D. by Buddhayaśas and Chu Fo-nien 竺佛念.<sup>22</sup> We have also seen that the *Bhadrakalpika*, a clearly Mahāyāna sutra translated by 300 (or 291) into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa,

<sup>18</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 71.

<sup>19</sup> There seems to be no indication of painted images in the bays.

<sup>20</sup> Behrendt notes that "This arrangement of iconic Buddha images, common at many later Buddhist sites on the Indian subcontinent (for example, the 5<sup>th</sup> century addition of axial images to Sānci stupa I), appears to be the result of a long, progressive development that can be traced at sites in Greater Gandhāra." He notes the axial gateways at the main stupa of Dharmarājikā and in the phase I GSt3 encasement of the main stupa at Butkara I, and the construction of a set of axial stairways at the Dharmarājikā stupa at the beginning of phase III in proto-semi-ashlar masonry. Behrendt (2004), p. 145.

<sup>21</sup> "...part of the original [J1 stupa] remains and it can be determined that the lowest terrace was "divided by corinthian pilasters into 11 bays on each side, the central one of which contained an image of the Buddha in a trefoil niche. Of these four only one has survived—in the middle of the west side." Marshall (1951), p. 264.

<sup>22</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. I, (T 1), pp. 1c-2a. See below section III.C.2 on Buddha images of the "main stone stupa" at Sahri Bahlol Site B for full translation of this passage.



contains the lives of all the thousand Buddhas, including the first four Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa. In addition, the phrase “four-direction Buddhas” or “Buddhas of the four directions” (ssu-fang 四方), or “Buddhas of the four directions, four intermediate directions, zenith and nadir,” occurs rather frequently in the Mahāyāna sutras translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425. This kind of reference gives emphasis to the spatial dimensions, but usually without naming any specific Buddhas.

Whether or not at this time (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century) the Buddhas of the four-directions are synonymous (at least in some cases, and with some of the art) with the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (or, put another way, the three predecessors of Śākyamuni together with Śākyamuni, but not including Maitreya as the fifth Buddha) is not yet entirely certain. The first-hand records of Fa-hsien concerning his travels through Central Asia, Gandhāra and India ca. 400-415 do, however, make specific mention of the “four Buddhas” on a number of occasions, and in each case he is referring to Śākyamuni and his three predecessors, and he is generally referring to images and/or stupas. For example, in Chapter XIX, at Saket in Central India, Fa-hsien notes the place where “the four Buddhas walked and sat” and says that a stupa had been built there that was still existing. In Chapter XXI, he notes the stupas built for Kāśyapa, Krakucchanda and Kanakamuni at each of their respective places of birth, the place where each “met his father”, and the place where each attained Parinirvāṇa—all in Central India.<sup>23</sup> Further, in Chapter XVII, at Saṅkāśya, at the place where Buddha descended from the Trayastrimśas Heaven, he notes that King Aśoka built a viḥāra and that “behind the viḥāra he erected a stone pillar, about 50 cubits high, with a lion on top.”<sup>24</sup> Let into the pillar, on each of its four sides, there is an image of Buddha ...” Fa-hsien goes on to note that “... At the places where Buddha, when he was in the world, cut his hair and nails, topes [stupas] are erected; and where the three Buddhas that preceded Śākyamuni Buddha and he himself sat; where they walked, and where images of their persons were made. At all these places topes [stupas] were made, and are still existing.”<sup>25</sup> At Mt. Gṛdhrakūṭa in Rājgir, Fa-hsien observes that: “... In front of the cavern there are the places where the four Buddhas sat...”; and at Champa (Chapter XXXVII) he records that there are stupas “where Buddha walked in meditation by his viḥāra and where he and the three Buddhas, his predecessors, sat...”<sup>26</sup> From these records made by Fa-hsien, there is frequent mention to the four Buddhas and it is clear that he is referring to Śākyamuni and his three predecessors. It appears that four Buddhas of the present kalpa (Bhadrakalpa) were a well-known and venerated grouping in the art of India ca. 400.

The issue is complex, however, since other Buddhas are named with respect to the four directions in texts which are clearly Mahāyāna, such as the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra* (*Chin-kuang-ming ching* 金光明經 (T 663) translated into Chinese by Dharmakṣema between 414-421 under the Northern Liang) and the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經 (T 643) translated by Buddhahadra ca. 412-420 in South China under the Eastern Chin.<sup>27</sup> Further, in Chinese art during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, the four Buddhas have variable identities when used on the four sides of a central pillar. Because Stupas K1 and N4 and early phase of J1 at Dharmarājikā are early examples in Gandhāra of what appears to be a set of four Buddhas, it is most likely that they represent the four Buddhas as mentioned in the *Dīrghanikāya*, that is, Śākyamuni and his three predecessors. They also appear, however, to be associated with the four directions, but it is not clear that this necessarily means there is a direct Mahāyāna emphasis.

<sup>23</sup> James Legge, (1965 reprint of 1886 original), p. 55 and pp. 63-64.

<sup>24</sup> The actual Aśokan pillar found there had an elephant on top.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>27</sup> These will be more directly addressed below in section XII concerning the T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang.

The surviving Buddha statue of Stupa K1 is from the north side niche and it is clearly in *dhyāna mudrā* (Figs. 8.3c, d). The Buddha in the east niche surviving in Stupa N4 as seen in Fig. 8.3e, even though somewhat eroded, is clearly in the *dharmachakra mudrā*.<sup>28</sup> The issue of the appearance of the *dharmachakra mudrā* is frequently cited by scholars as a reason for dating Gandhāran sculpture having the *dharmachakra mudrā* to a relatively late phase of Gandhāran art. It is interesting to keep in mind that the Stupa N4 example can indicate that the *dharmachakra mudrā* was current at least by ca. 200-mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, depending upon the scale used to date the monuments, as discussed above. Further, the usage of the *dharmachakra mudrā* in the east niche of Stupa N4 can be considered in light of the identification of the Buddhas used in a four Buddha configuration, as discussed below in section III.C.2 with the set of four Buddhas at Sahrī Bahlōl B.<sup>29</sup>

The north niche from Stupa K1 is the best preserved of the niches on K1, N4 (J1 is not available) and retained much its original stucco at the time of Marshall's excavation (Fig. 8.3c). The niche at N4 shows the stone structural design that underlay the stucco (Fig. 8.3e). The K1 and N4 niches recede into the masonry wall, but according to Fitzsimmons, the J1 west wall niche "does not recede into the body of the panel as in the case at K1 and N4".<sup>30</sup> The niches of K1 and N4 have the top portion in the form of the gable used frequently in the sculptural decoration of the domes of stupas in the Taxila and Peshāwar areas during the early centuries A.D. It appears here as a pointed arch with scrolling ends and is the topmost portion of the niche that is lifted above, but attached to, the more curved half-arches to left and right below, thus making a form that fits the form of the seated Buddha statue. The complete niche takes on a trilobed or trefoil shape, but its special form would seem to derive from the architectural gable. It is a form widely seen in niche depiction and construction in the Taxila, Peshawar and Haḍḍa areas. In the Stupa K1 niche in Fig. 8.3c, the top arch has a point and a relatively wide raised border rim. Also, the total width of the arch molding is relatively narrow, unlike the wider molding of later stupa niches, as seen at Jauliān, Ali Masjid and Haḍḍa (Figs. 8.15, 8.26c, 8.32c). The niche itself is quite deep and the image, which sits on a low, raised rectangular seat with upper and lower projection, is completely recessed.

<sup>28</sup> There is no data on the image in the J1 niche that survived in the middle of the west wall.

<sup>29</sup> If we apply to Stupas K1 and N4 the scheme that is discussed in relation to the four Buddhas of the main stone stupa of Sahrī Bahlōl Site B, which is detailed below in section III.C.2, assuming that K1 and N4 might have had the same configuration, then an identification pattern for the niches of Stupas K1 and N4 could be postulated. That is, taking the *mudrās* and directions of the images in Stupas K1 and N4 and combining them to postulate a model stupa that would be read in circumambulatory direction, we can derive two possible schemes:

Scheme A: North: *dhyāna mudrā* (Krakucchanda)  
 East: *dharmachakra mudrā* (Kanakamuni)  
 South: *dharmachakra mudrā* (Kāśyapa)  
 West: *dhyāna mudrā* (Śākyamuni)  
 Scheme B: North: *dhyāna mudrā* (Śākyamuni)  
 East: *dharmachakra mudrā* (Kāśyapa)  
 South: *dharmachakra mudrā* (Kanakamuni)  
 West: *dhyāna mudrā* (Krakucchanda)

Some further information would be needed to choose between these two or to postulate other schemes. Perhaps it could be established that the normal reading starts either with the most recent Buddha (Śākyamuni) (Scheme B) or with the first Buddha of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda) (scheme A), the latter being the most likely. It is also possible that the *mudrās* may not have followed the pattern as seen in the "main stone stupa" of Sahrī Bahlōl B and that different areas and different monasteries used different iconographic criteria, so for the moment, the above suggestions are only tentative working hypotheses.

<sup>30</sup> Fitzsimmons, (2001), p. 72. There is no photo available of the J1 niche.

The form of the image in the K1 niche (Fig. 8.3c, d) shows slender proportions and sensitive modulations of the torso, revealing the shape of the rib cage and shoulders through the thin garment, whose individually raised string folds are not strictly parallel. There is a quality of delicacy, naturalism and restraint without formality, excess or rigidity in either body or drapery. According to Marshall's assessment this image was very finely made. He did not have cause to mention that it may have been a replacement, so we can think it may be original: ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter or late 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Marshall's dating), or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Behrendt's early Phase III), or ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (Fitzsimmon's dating). Though we do not have the remains of the upper levels of either K1 or N4, we can note from the lower two levels that the usage of imagery on the monument seems limited and restrained, which is likely an early feature.<sup>31</sup> The pilasters of the K1 niche are relatively shallow and the capital quite wide, especially the bracket planks on top. Remains of the egg and dart decorative motif is, according to Marshall, a later repair. Well formed deep brackets support the eave cornice. The fine cornice bracketing is of particular interest because it appears to be supporting the cornice, which appears like a "roof" or "eave", in a way that could relate to the Chinese form of multiple-eave pagodas (this will be discussed more in detail in subsequent volumes). Here it can be remarked that the Chinese style stupa could be a modification and or elaboration to a degree of the type of Gandhāran stupa as seen in the remains of Taxila and Haḍḍa in particular.

It can also be noted here that the decoration of the berm area of the Dharmarājikā Great Stupa (Fig. 8.3a), which, according to Marshall's assessment based on the type of stone work, was added in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Behrendt's assessment places this addition in his early phase III, ca. early 3<sup>rd</sup> century), shows the usage of a row of alternating trefoil (trilobed) and trabeated (trapezoidal) niches encircling the entire berm except for the area of the large projection containing three main image niches (Fig. 8.3a). This row of alternating niches possibly held (stone or stucco?) images, but now there is no trace of them. Considering the study of the Mohrā Morādu stupa below in section II.B.2, it could be interesting to count the number of niches around the Dharmarājikā Stupa. Above is a cornice supported by a row of brackets. The circular base of the stupa has bays demarcated by pilasters, but these bays apparently had no images. The scheme of alternating trilobed and trabeated (trapezoidal) niches is established quite early in the art of Taxila and remains a standard form for multiple niches depicted throughout the flourishing period of stucco production in Gandhāran art in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, as we shall see in some examples to follow.

### B. *Main stupas at Jauliān and Mohrā Morādu*

These two mountain monasteries still fortunately retain many remains from the later phase of Gandhāran art, so they become prime examples for the study of the stucco sculptures that were applied to the major structures, and for the remains of smaller images and subsidiary or miniature stupas, all of which provide important evidences for the study of sets of multiple Buddhas in the Taxila region around the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 1. *Jauliān*

Jauliān is a moderate sized monastery located in the hills northeast of Dharmarājikā (Figs. 8.2, 8.4, color Pl. VIII). According to John Marshall, the original foundation of Jauliān "is to be ascribed to the Kushān

<sup>31</sup> The upper portions of J1 were renovated later. When Marshall uncovered the stupa he found large stucco atlantes and elephants holding up the second level. Marshall (1951), pl. 58a, b.

period, in the second century A.D., and their destruction to the latter part of the fifth century A.D.”<sup>32</sup> K. Behrendt states that Jauliāñ was founded during Phase I (200 B.C. to mid 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.) and greatly expanded during Phase III (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century). Patronage did not stop until sometime in early Phase IV (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century). This dating, in Behrendt’s view, appears to be generally confirmed by numismatic evidence. Of the 126 coins recovered at the site, 26 were minted during Phases I and II (mid-1<sup>st</sup> century to ca. 200), and the other 100 were produced in middle and late Phase III. These support a Phase II-IV occupation of the site, with most activity in the latter part of phase III.<sup>33</sup> Marshall remarks that the monuments at Jauliāñ “are of exceptional interest from their remarkable state of preservation, many of them having apparently been but lately erected and the rest but lately repaired and redecorated when they were overtaken by the catastrophe which resulted in their burial.” Further, he states that Jauliāñ “... comprises countless examples of every kind of figure employed in the fifth century to adorn the smaller class of stupas.”<sup>34</sup>

Because the main stupa at Jauliāñ contains the configuration of five bay-niches with large stucco sculpture on the two sides and back, we will first consider the iconography of the images of this main stupa, even though it presents a difficult case in many respects. This appraisal will, however, serve to introduce us to some of the complexities of Gandhāran iconography in a monument of major importance within the monastery of Jauliāñ, one of the great monasteries of Taxila, and thus pave the way to more realistically contrast and judge the appearances of the five Buddha sets in other iconographic schema and other types of monuments, such as the subsidiary or votive stupas.

#### a. *Layout and Scheme of Main Images*

The main stupa, located in the upper stupa court (Fig. 8.4), is rectangular (almost square), measuring 30’ 9” long north-south and 27’ 6” wide east-west. On the east it has a staircase leading to the platform (with a frontal projection) that supports the drum/dome (now destroyed). The dome was positioned slightly towards the rear, a form apparently used only for large stupas in the Taxila region. Portions of the high walls of the base or lower portion, variously termed the “podium” (Fitzsimmons) or “plinth” (Marshall), survived at the time of Marshall’s excavation along with some of their stucco images and decoration (Fig. 8.5a). Marshall notes that “the core of the structure is of rubble and its facing of late transitional diaper repaired with semi-ashlar, with kañjūr blocks let in for mouldings and pilasters.” In his opinion, “the original fabric dates from early Kushan times (second century A.D.), but the semi-ashlar repairs as well as the plaster reliefs are some three centuries later, when the whole edifice was completely renovated.”<sup>35</sup> Behrendt places the making of the original stupa near the end of his Phase II (thus ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> century) and the stucco additions to his Phase III (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries).<sup>36</sup> Fitzsimmons associates the original main stupa at Jauliāñ with his “Design F” stupa category using masonry classified as his Type 7 (late diaper masonry),<sup>37</sup> which in his terms would place the dating for the original stupa in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. (see his chronology table in section I).

<sup>32</sup> Marshall (1960), p. 164; Marshall (1951), p. 387.

<sup>33</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 156.

<sup>34</sup> Marshall (1951), pp. 368, 523.

<sup>35</sup> Marshall (1951), p. 371.

<sup>36</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 94-95 and note 46, discussed in conjunction with Mohrā Morādu.

<sup>37</sup> Fitzsimmons’ masonry Types 4-7 correspond to the broad category of Marshall’s “diaper” masonry, but Fitzsimmons seeks to provide more nuanced chronological changes. Type 7 is therefore advanced in the period using diaper masonry. T. Fitzsimmons, *Stupa Designs at Taxila*, Kyoto, 2001, p. 18.

Unfortunately, the fragmentary condition of the stucco sculpture and the lack of complete photo documentation or detailed description makes it very difficult to assess the possible identity and underlying scheme of the images on the podium (plinth). It is unlikely that the images were a random assortment, but rather followed some meaningful order and layout. By looking at the evidences we have, it would appear that with each of the five bays separated by pilasters along the side and back walls, one large stucco Buddha image was added with the pedestal projecting out in front of the bay (Figs. 8.5a-c). Those along the south (rear wall) which were best preserved were apparently all seated in dhyāna mudrā (Figs. 8.5a-c), though some appear quite ruined. Marshall describes the general configuration, but does not give specific details (i.e., condition of each image), niche by niche or wall by wall. He writes as follows: “The figural decoration on the south, east and west sides of the plinth consists of a seated colossal Buddha in the dhyāna-mudrā occupying the bay between each pair of pilasters, and of smaller Buddhas seated, one above the other, on the face of the pilasters.<sup>38</sup> All of these figures, large and small, are of relatively late date (c. fifth century A.D.) and demonstrably more modern than the body of the stupa.”<sup>39</sup>

According to Marshall, Fig. 8.5d shows the remains of the large Buddha from the central bay of the back (south) wall opposite Stupa A11 (Fig. 8.4). It was moved to the Taxila Museum and has clearly been restored (Fig. 8.5d). The *in-situ* view of the image on the wall before removal can be seen in Fig. 8.8c. The restoration in the Taxila Museum shows a large dhyānāsana Buddha that occupies the entire bay and extends beyond the pilasters so that the knees and pedestal of the image are in front of part of the pilasters on each side. In this restoration two smaller Buddhas appear on the middle portion of each flanking pilaster, but other views of *in-situ* small Buddhas (Figs. 8.5f, g) show at least some were located lower down as well, so the restoration is not definitive and may be partial.

In considering the possible iconographic scheme of the main stupa at Jauliān, from the *in-situ* published photos in addition to those of the south (back) wall, we can see some remains that would tend to verify the presence of large seated Buddha statues on the east wall (Figs. 8.5e, f)<sup>40</sup> similar to those of the south wall, which has the best remains of five large Buddhas. The west wall is largely ruined and impossible to determine, though we can assume that this wall was similar to the east and south walls. Several photos show the front wall (north wall with the staircase), which on the east side at the time of excavation had a seated Buddha in the bay closest to the staircase (Fig. 8.5h).<sup>41</sup> The faint remains of another sculpture, probably a seated Buddha, can be seen in the adjacent bay to the east (Fig. 8.5h). At the right of the staircase on the west side of the north wall the two bays each held one large standing Buddha, the remains of which are seen in Fig. 8.5i.<sup>42</sup> One might expect symmetrical images left and

<sup>38</sup> Marshall (1951), III, pls. 105, a; 109, h and 154, a.

<sup>39</sup> Marshall, (1951), p. 371; John Marshall, *Excavations at Taxila: The Stupas and Monasteries at Jauliān, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 7, Calcutta, 1921, pp. 5-6. In Marshall (1921), p. 6, he says: “All of these figures, large and small, are of a relatively late date (*circa* 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) and demonstrably more modern than the body of the stupa. This difference between the age of the reliefs and the body of the monument is evident from the clumsy fashion in which the larger figures have been applied to the face of the walls by filling the hollows between the horizontal base-mouldings with small stone and mud, building up a base of the required size (generally of the same materials) and finishing off with a coat of coarse lime plaster.”

<sup>40</sup> Marshall (1951), pl. 104a, showing the east wall from a distance; pl. 108a showing a closer view partially blocked by a small stupa in front.

<sup>41</sup> This Buddha has a hole in the abdomen and the remains of an inscription in Kharoṣṭhī citing the “(The gift) of Bud-dhamitra, who delighted in the Law.” Marshall (1921), p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Marshall found the largest image on the ground in front where it had apparently slipped off its pedestal.



right of the staircase, but it is possible that some of the images are a later replacement, or there may have been an iconographic reason for having a different presentation of standing versus seated (or of larger versus smaller) images.

If one considers the possible scheme of the images around the Jauliān main stupa, there appear to be at least two main possibilities (other than the scheme of random image placement, which seems to me to have been highly unlikely). It is true that the less than perfect condition of the walls creates a problematic situation, but there are perhaps enough surviving clues to suggest two possible reasonable schemes: a) each wall is considered to be a discrete unit, or b) all the walls are cumulatively taken in circumambulation order around the stupa. Scheme a) would produce a discrete set of five Buddhas on each of the three walls. The three walls in turn could perhaps be considered as three different time periods (Past, Present and Future) or three realms (Desire, Form and Formless). In scheme b), if one considers only the major Buddha images in each of the main bays of the entire podium, then the scheme, following circumambulation direction from the front, would yield: possibly 2 seated Buddhas (north wall east side), 5 seated Buddhas (east wall), 5 seated Buddhas (south wall), probably 5 seated Buddhas (west wall), 2 standing Buddhas (north wall west side). If we consider the possibility of a continuous sequencing of Buddhas, the total of the main bays would yield 19 Buddhas. This number is not significant as a known set of Buddhas. If we consider only the two side and back walls (east, south and west walls), each with five large Buddhas, then the total is 15, which is also not an apparently meaningful number. However, further consideration can be made taking into account the remains of other dhyānāsana Buddha images that could have been considered part of the program. For example, in Fig. 8.5i a dhyānāsana Buddha appears at the angled juncture of the corner pilaster (between west side of the front wall and the staircase). Also, there may have been two seated Buddhas (like the loose one leaning against the molding near the corner in Fig. 8.5i) originally in front of both standing Buddhas, as indicated by the broken lumps. Counting both standing Buddhas and the three smaller seated dhyānāsana Buddhas makes a total of five in this area. If we assume that the opposite side of the staircase had the same arrangement with a total of five Buddhas, then the total count around the entire stupa would increase and there would be a total of 25, which is a number consonant with the lineage provided by the *Buddhavarṇsa* in which Gotama Buddha is the 25<sup>th</sup> Buddha in the lineage counting from Dīpaṃkara. (See Chapter 7, notes 140 and 141 for discussion of the *Buddhavarṇsa* text). In Fig. 8.5a there is a moderate sized dhyānāsana Buddha that seems to have been added separately from the five large images of the east wall. Perhaps it could have been part of the total count, or perhaps it is an anomaly and simply added as an image completely different from the original scheme at a different time. However, it is possible to think that such apparent additions may have been made to achieve the desired requisite number for the scheme of images. The suggestion here is that the larger images within the bays may have been supplemented by Buddhas of smaller size (possibly by additions at the corners) which could have been counted within the totality to make the meaningful number desired.

In scheme a) the set of five Buddhas is emphasized. As noted earlier, the *Buddhavarṇsa*, a text of the Pali Canon (probably with some later additions), clearly and specifically states: “In this bhadda-eon there have been three leaders, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana and the leader Kassapa. I at the present time am the Self-Awakened One, and there will be Metteyya. These are the five Buddhas, wise ones, compassionate toward the world.”<sup>43</sup> Other texts, such as the *Bhadrakalpika* (translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 300 or 291 A.D.) provide detailed descriptions for the thousand Buddhas of this

<sup>43</sup> *Buddhavarṇsa*, Chapter XXVII: Miscellany on the Buddhas, verses 18 and 19, p. 97.



eon, of which the first five are naturally prominent. The interpretation of the large main dhyānāsana stucco Buddhas on the east, south and west sides of the main stupa at Jauliān as three discrete sets of the five Buddhas is further supported by other instances in Gandhāran and Afghanistan Buddhist art of ca. 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century as will become apparent below.

In scheme b), as suggested above, the large and medium-sized stucco Buddhas surrounding the walls may represent the early lineage of Buddhas from Dīpaṃkara (with or without the three predecessors of Dīpaṃkara) to Śākyamuni, as known in the *Buddhavaṃsa*, where the list yields 24 (or 27) predecessors of Śākyamuni or, including Śākyamuni, 25 (or 28). If Maitreya is included the number would be 26 (or 29). This scheme, which is a little more problematic considering the ruined condition of the images on the main stupa, is nevertheless supported to a degree by other cases of apparent usage of 25 or 28 Buddhas, such as seen on the dome of the stupa at Mohrā Morādu discussed below.

#### b. *Small Pilaster Buddhas*

With regard to the small stucco Buddhas on the pilasters, it is difficult to determine at present whether or not they would have been included in the count of the total scheme of the large Buddhas or were a subsidiary grouping with or without any connection with the large main Buddhas. The only data we have concerning these small Buddhas on the pilasters is Marshall's statement that there were "smaller Buddhas seated, one above the other, on the face of the pilasters."<sup>44</sup> From Figs. 8.5f and g showing details of the east side of the main stupa, there are seen the remains of two small pilaster Buddhas which are placed low on the pilaster between two of the large Buddhas on the east wall.<sup>45</sup> Both are seated on lotus pedestals. The lower Buddha is dhyānāsana; the upper Buddha is in an advanced form of dharmachakra mudrā with the left hand held lower so all the fingers are exposed (Fig. 8.5g). The reconstruction of the central large Buddha on the south wall in Fig. 8.5d shows two dhyānāsana Buddhas on one side and one dhyānāsana Buddha and one dharmachakra Buddha on the other side. This mixing of mudrā types could suggest some meaningful identity. Such a grouping using one dharmachakra Buddha among a group of four dhyānāsana Buddhas is seen in some of the stupas of Haḍḍa (Fig. 8.37b) discussed below. Fig. 8.5j (H. 10") could be one of the pilaster Buddhas in the dharmachakra mudrā from the main stupa of Jauliān.

In considering the meaning and function of the small Buddhas on the pilasters, it is of some interest to note the scheme of small Buddhas painted above the large main Buddhas on the walls of the small Temple B recently unearthed at Kara-dong (Keriya) near Khotan on the Southern Silk Road. This site was discussed in Vol. I<sup>46</sup> and dated based on the evidences of the archaeological team that unearthed the site to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> In the excavation report, a reconstruction of the wall paintings of the rear and entrance walls of Temple B, one of the two Buddhist temples that were discovered and excavated at the site, shows the top of each wall having two rows of seven dhyānāsana Buddhas (Figs. 8.6a, b). Each Buddha is seated on a lotus pedestal and each has a mandorla with body and head halo. Below is another frieze at the level of the heads of the large standing Buddhas—three on the

<sup>44</sup> Marshall (1951), I, p. 371.

<sup>45</sup> Possibly between Stupas A7 and A6.

<sup>46</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 318–321.

<sup>47</sup> *Keriya, mémoires d'un fleuve*, Mission archéologique franco-chinoise au Xinjiang, under the direction of Corinne Debaine-Francfort and Abduressul Idriss, Paris, 2001. Dating of the site as occupied from the 2nd–4th centuries A.D. was supported by carbon 14 testing that yielded a date of A.D. 183–412. C. Debaine-Francfort, A. Idriss, and B. H. Wang, "Agriculture irriguée et art bouddhique ancien au coeur de Taklamakan (Karadong, Xinjiang, IIe–IVe siècles)", *Arts Asiatiques*, Vol. XLIX, 1994, p. 35 and footnote 9.

rear wall (Fig. 8.6a) and two on the entrance wall (Fig. 8.6b). This frieze has two of the small Buddhas arranged with each of the main standing Buddhas as a group. However, on the entrance wall (Fig. 8.6b) there are only two large standing Buddhas, one on either side of the doorway, both of which have two dhyānāsana Buddhas at head level, but over the doorway there are three small dhyānāsana Buddhas (Fig. 8.6b). It is presumed that the two side walls of this square temple had the same configuration as the rear (main) wall. If so, then all four walls had two rows of seven Buddhas in the upper part. If each row is added together as a continuous unit, then the topmost row and the row below both have a total of 28 dhyānāsana Buddhas, the number of Buddhas cited in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and including the three predecessors of Dīpaṃkara plus Śākyamuni. The horizontal frieze at the head level of the main standing Buddhas, however, has a total of six dhyānāsana Buddhas on each of the walls except the entrance wall, which has seven. If these are added together, the total is 25, which could also refer to the *Buddhavaṃsa* listing without including the three predecessors of Dīpaṃkara.

Thus, the Kara-dong Temple B configuration of small Buddhas suggests a repetition of the seven Buddhas,<sup>48</sup> a set known since the time of Bhārhut Stupa in Indian art, in the two top rows on the rear and front walls (and possibly, by conjecture, also on the side walls). In total,  $7 \times 4$  (walls) = 28 total Buddhas in each row, which could represent two continuous rows of the 28 Buddhas of the lineage in the *Buddhavaṃsa*. Also, if each wall is taken separately, the configuration could represent the seven Buddhas repeated two times in each of the four directions. In either case, it appears that the set of seven Buddhas is the main modular unit. From this scheme it could be suggested that in circumambulation, the worshipper could concentrate on the units of the seven Buddhas on the two top levels. Or, with each circuit the worshipper would concentrate on the upper two levels of 28 Buddhas and the lower level (at the head level of the main standing Buddhas) on 25 Buddhas. Thus, from this datable example from Karadong, the smaller Buddhas seem to present their own meaningful iconographic scheme.

In addition, at the same time the groups of small Buddhas related to the large Buddhas can be simultaneously grouped with each large Buddha to make a smaller unit of three-Buddhas (perhaps Past, Present, Future), and the dhyānāsana Buddhas of the top two rows are related as pairs by a vertical frame, which links two Buddhas together in the vertical axis. With regard to the large main standing Buddhas, there are three on the rear wall (and probably also on each sides wall) and two on the front (entrance) wall. While three could refer to the Buddhas of the Three Ages, it is not clear what the two standing Buddhas would represent, nor does the totality of eleven Buddhas make a known set. Though this might argue for a discrete reading for each wall, in regard to the small dhyānāsana Buddhas, the likelihood is that they could be read both as discrete to each wall (the seven Buddhas in the four directions) or as a totality of 28 or 25 Buddhas of the *Buddhavaṃsa* lineage. This suggests that there may well be multiple readings of the images within the temple, a possibility for the images on the outside of a stupa as well.

The apparent scheme of small Buddhas in the Kara-dong Temple B wall paintings, though not exactly analogous to the scheme at Jauliāñ, does have some similarities, such as the small Buddhas seated on lotus seats and the panel-like vertical linkage between pairs of Buddhas (as seen in the Kara-dong temple in the top two rows), somewhat resembling the appearance of small Buddhas arranged vertically on pilasters. From this example it is possible to think that the small Buddhas on the pilasters originally represented a meaningful subsidiary scheme (or schemes) of Buddhas, though it is hard to

<sup>48</sup> These are Vipasyin (Vipassin), Śikhin (Sikhin), Viśabhū (Vessabhū), Krakucchanda (Kakusandha), Kanakamuni (Koṇāgamaṇa), Kāśyapa (Kassapa).

say in what manner they would have been laid out in the case of the main stupa at Jauliāñ without more surviving *in-situ* evidence.

At this juncture, it could be considered that the five large Buddhas in the bays of the east, south and west walls on the main stupa at Jauliāñ may be the five-Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa, repeated three times, which might refer to the triple world (a Mahāyāna concept), or they could be considered to represent, together with the images on the front (north) walls, in totality the 25 or 28 Buddhas of the lineage presented in the *Buddhavaṃsa* (or possibly 26 or 29, if Maitreya were added). Taking into account the sculptural decoration of the main stupa of Mohṛā Morādu (a monastery site less than a mile from Jauliāñ), there may be some reason to support the suggestion for the usage of the chronological lineage of the *Buddhavaṃsa* as the main scheme for the stupa decoration at Jauliāñ, though the clear dominance of the five colossal Buddhas on the three walls of the Jauliāñ main stupa strongly supports the emphasis on the set of five Buddhas. Other considerations may be required to resolve this issue at Jauliāñ. We will return to Jauliāñ after first considering the main stupa at Mohṛā Morādu.

## 2. Mohṛā Morādu

The site of Mohṛā Morādu lies in a valley behind the small village of the same name and less than a mile southwest from Jauliāñ (Figs. 8.2, 8.7a, color Pl. X). Like Jauliāñ, the main stupa at Mohṛā Morādu was also probably first built in ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> century according to Marshall and Behrendt (or by mid-4<sup>th</sup> century according to Fitzsimmons).<sup>49</sup> It is generally believed to have been renovated and refurbished around the same time as the additions were being made on the Jauliāñ main stupa. According to Marshall, the original main stupa and the monastery were both composed of the same large diaper masonry dating to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. and the “additions and repairs are in late semi-ashlar work and for the most part were executed some two centuries later.”<sup>50</sup> Marshall considers the Mohṛā Morādu sculptures to be artistically superior to those of the main stupa of Jauliāñ, but he dates the two to the same general period. Behrendt appears to agree with Marshall on these points. He notes that the “numismatic evidence shows that phase III into early phase IV was the main period of occupation at the site ... Even though Mohṛā Morādu was occupied throughout phase III, no image shrines comparable to those surrounding the main *stūpa* at the nearby site of Jauliāñ were ever built. Instead, many individually commissioned additive stucco images were placed on the drum and base of the main stupa, on the adjacent small stupas, and in the monastery ...”<sup>51</sup>

The Mohṛā Morādu main stupa is larger (38' long east-west; 35' wide north-south) than the Jauliāñ main stupa (which is 30' 9" long north-south; 27' 6" wide east-west) and was better preserved when excavated by Marshall, including part of the drum and dome, which was still exposed above the accumulated debris when Marshall began his excavation (Fig. 8.7b). According to Marshall, the berm, which was at a height of 16 feet above ground level, “was covered with a layer of concrete about one inch in thickness and composed of river bajrī and lime.” He found no trace of a relic chamber and assumed that, if there was one, it must have been in the destroyed part of the dome. He further notes

<sup>49</sup> Marshall, (1951), p. 358. Behrendt ascribes it to the end of his late phase II (i.e., ca. end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century). Behrendt (2004), pp. 159, 94. Fitzsimmons dates it to before the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century as his Design F with Type 7 masonry. Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 68.

<sup>50</sup> Marshall (1951), pp. 358 and 362.

<sup>51</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 159.

that “Apparently, the whole surface of the structure up to the top of the drum was covered in figural reliefs.”<sup>52</sup>

a. *Stupa Drum/Dome*

Around the drum at the base of the dome there are 28 bay-niches and 28 pilasters according to the plan published in *Taxila* (Fig. 8.7c). Marshall does not specifically mention the number of pilasters or bay-niches in his text. Each bay-niche apparently held remains of a stucco image, several of which can still be seen in the *in situ* photos (Figs. 8.7b, d). These photos also show a small dhyānāsana Buddha remaining on the face of a few of the pilasters that frame the bay-niches. It can probably be assumed that at least one small dhyānāsana Buddha adorned each pilaster at the time the larger stucco images were made for the drum. The number of 28 bay-niches, each of which presumably held a stucco Buddha image, corresponds to the lineage of Buddhas from Dipaṃkara to Śākyamuni (plus the three predecessors of Dipaṃkara) as delineated in the *Buddhavaṃsa*, as noted above. Similarly, the smaller dhyānāsana Buddha images on the pilasters of the drum would also appear to offer the same lineage of the 28 Buddhas, possibly as a second set of 28 to be contemplated on a second circumambulatory passage around the stupa by a worshipper, as similarly suggested for the small dhyānāsana images seen in the wall paintings of Temple B at Kara-dong, datable to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (see above). As noted in our discussion of the main stupa of Jauliān, it is possible that there are multiple schemes that are integrated and may offer a sequence of worship (or conform to different modes of practice), though at this juncture it is difficult to draw this out without further study.

According to the more recent on-site observations of Fitzsimmons, the drum is divided by pilasters into panels which stretch all around its circumference.<sup>53</sup> Fitzsimmons noticed that the widths of the panels (bay-niches) differ in a regular pattern, that is, at the four cardinal (compass) points some panels are smaller than the others (the stupa is aligned to the four cardinal directions, with the front facing the east). At the south, west and north compass points two panels are comparatively narrower than the other panels and on the eastern compass point at the front, there is a symmetrical arrangement of six narrow panels.<sup>54</sup> The two narrow panels at the south, west and north compass points are approximately 80–85 cm in width; the panels between the narrow groups are between 120–125 cm (in the western hemisphere) and between 135 and 145 cm (in the eastern hemisphere). The six narrower panels on the front (east compass point) measure between 92–97 cm for the two innermost ones and the other four are a little larger.<sup>55</sup> We have already encountered the four directions emphasized in Stupas K1, N4 and J1 at Dharmarājikā. Based on Fitzsimmons’ observations and measurements, it appears that the four directions may be especially demarcated in the drum of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu. Fitzsimmons suggests that this “highlighting” by means of narrower panels at the four

<sup>52</sup> Marshall, (1951), pp. 358–359.

<sup>53</sup> Since the excavation photo of the Mohrā Morādu main stupa shows considerable destruction of the south side of the dome/drum (Marshall (1951), pl. 92b), it is clear that there has been substantial reconstruction of the drum area, including the pilasters and bay-niches. However, we can probably assume that care was taken to reasonably calculate the positions of the bay-niches based upon the considerable number of the original ones that did survive.

<sup>54</sup> Though difficult to discern, the changes in the widths are incorporated into the plan of the Mohrā Morādu plan given in Marshall (1951), pl. 93b.

<sup>55</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 24–25. He was unable to reach the area of the four slightly larger panels of the front and not able to measure them. He also noted that the drum has no staircase, but, interestingly, the stupa at Badalpur (Taxila) does. *Ibid.*, p. 25. It is interesting to note that Rawak stupa, which is cruciform in plan with a staircase at each of the four directions, apparently had a staircase access all the way to the drum level. See Rhie (1999), fig. 4.20a and A. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1907, II, Pl. XL.

directions is intentional.<sup>56</sup> In the case of Mohrā Morādu this directional emphasis appears to be in a context of combining with the total of 28 Buddhas both in the niches and on the pilasters.

Further, if we reconstruct the layout of the niches and pilasters on the drum of the dome of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu beginning at the center of the front and moving in a clockwise direction (the logical direction to use as a reference because it is the direction of circumambulation), interestingly a pattern of seven bay-niches emerges in each quadrant, as shown in the drawing in Fig. 8.7c. Such a configuration would appear to have particular relevancy, as it repeats the seven Buddha configuration four times, thus also being a repetition of the seven Buddhas in four quadrants (representing the four directions of space) as well as being a lineage of the 28 Buddhas presented two times (once in the bay-niches with large dhyānāsana Buddha images and another time on the pilasters with smaller dhyānāsana Buddha images). This would also indicate a more complex scheme of several meaningful, integrated but not mutually exclusive interpretations. That is, these sets of Buddhas may actually present multiple levels of interpretation and multiple ways of reading, all geared to being suitable for the practice of worshippers, monastic members, etc. in terms of varying degrees of practice or even possibly incorporating both the ideals of Hinayāna (in the lineage) and Mahāyāna (in the spatial component). These schemes are certainly worthy of further consideration and investigation along those lines and in terms of the interpretation of doctrine.

The combining of the lineage of Buddhas with clear directional axes possibly reflects changing ideas in the religion of the area, ideas that are also part of the early Mahāyāna sutras which stress the cosmological aspects frequently in terms of the cosmic spatial directions.<sup>57</sup> Whether what appears to be a combining of the traditional lineage of Buddhas in the *Buddhavaṃsa* with the new trends emphasizing the cosmic directions of space is a factor of the harmonizing of the old and the new (or the Hinayāna with the Mahāyāna), is difficult to say, but it is a possibility that can be further considered. Such a combining attitude may also have been the case with the main stupa at Jauliāñ as well, though the iconography is different and evolves around the clear division of three walls (east, south and west) into the units of five colossal Buddhas as the main emphasis. Such an emphasis would appear to highlight the first five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa from the *Bhadrakalpika Sutra* (translated into Chinese 300 A.D. or 291 A.D. by Dharmarakṣa), though the set of five Buddhas is first mentioned as a group in the *Buddhavaṃsa*.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 25.

<sup>57</sup> In Chinese ceramics of the Three Kingdoms (220-265) and Western Chin (265-317) there are many examples of Yüeh ware ceramics and in the hun-p'ing funerary urns with small dhyānāsana Buddhas (See Rhie (1999), figs. 2.1-2.8). Some are clearly positioned in the four axial directions (Rhie (1999), figs. 2.2, 2.3, 2.4a, b); others seem to form a ring around the top of the vessel, which is laden with sculptures (*Ibid.*, figs. 2.7, 2.8). These have not been counted, but if they are, they too might yield some significant Buddhist set. Usually these images are seated on a lion pedestal, but sometimes there is clearly a lotus pedestal as well (*Ibid.*, fig. 2.4b). These hun-p'ing funerary urns may have been a kind of Buddhist reliquary, and as such may have taken some ideas from the Buddhist stupa, a funerary monument. The fact that these vessels are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century could reflect on the dating of the Gandhāran usage of the small Buddhas on a stupa monument, a factor that should possibly be considered.

<sup>58</sup> The Lōriyān Tāngai stone stupa (Fig. 5.25a) seems to have 28 small Buddhas ringing the lower circular area, but without an axial directional indicator (except for the square base). This could represent an earlier usage of the *Buddhavaṃsa* lineage and indeed the stone stupa from Lōriyān Tāngai probably predates the stucco imagery on the drum of the Mohrā Morādu main stupa by probably 100 or more years. There is more discussion of the Lōriyān Tāngai stupa in M. Rhie, "Identification and Interpretation of Some Sets of Multiple Buddhas in Gandhāran Art" (with reference to representations in China and Central Asia), *Kristi*, Vol. 1, (June, 2008), p. 41.



### b. *Podium Images*

The podium (plinth) of the Mohrā Morādu main stupa had stucco image configurations (added later, as was the case at Jauliāñ) in eight bays on each of the three sides (south, west and north) other than the entrance side (east, with the staircase), which has a total of four niches (Fig. 8.7c).<sup>59</sup> Thus the major niches around the four walls of the podium also total 28 (not including the staircase). In this case, as compared with Jauliāñ, the stucco images from these bays seem to have a more complex figure grouping, usually showing a large seated Buddha in dharmachakra or dhyāna mudrā with two, four or more attending images (Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and possibly other accompanying figures). If these are the 28 Buddhas aligned in the chronological order of the *Buddhavaṃsa*, then the attendants in each panel could simply be the attendants of that particular Buddha. However, some of the panels have two Buddhas in addition to the main Buddha, making a total of three Buddhas. In that case, it can be considered that the two attendant Buddhas in conjunction with the central Buddha could refer to the Buddhas of the Three Times (a Mahāyāna interpretation), or the two predecessors of the main Buddha (perhaps a more Hīnayāna interpretation). It does appear that the bay-niche next to the stair projection on the south side of the east wall (Fig. 8.8a) has the Buddhas of the Three Times (Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future). It has a large dhyānāsana Buddha in the center flanked by two relatively large images: on his left a standing Buddha and on his right a standing Bodhisattva (possibly Maitreya, indicating the future). If this is a representation of the Buddhas of the Three Times, then it is a prevailing Mahāyāna iconography. At present the iconography of these individual panels and the program of the podium configuration of panels as a whole is complicated to decipher and will not be attempted here.

In addition, along the sides of the staircase, the remains on the south side of the staircase show six standing Buddhas and two seated Buddhas, the latter two at the narrow end (Fig. 8.8a). The configurations on the staircase could be a separate representation from the program of images on the walls. Such a configuration on the staircase could refer to eight Buddhas (the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya, and/or possibly to the eight-direction Buddhas, but the former is more likely), with the two dhyānāsana Buddhas at the head of the row possibly being Maitreya and Śākyamuni.<sup>60</sup>

There are nine pilasters on the south, west and north sides of the podium of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu. Photos of the surviving stucco panels from the podium on the south side also show small seated Buddhas on the pilasters (Fig. 8.8b).<sup>61</sup> These only survived in the lower areas of the pilasters, so it is impossible to say how many small Buddhas were originally aligned up each pilaster, but there were apparently at least three, as shown in the right pilaster in Fig. 8.8b, which is an *in situ* photo of the fifth bay on the south side (counting in circumambulating direction). We can see in Fig. 8.8b that the lower small Buddha on each pilaster flanking the bay is smaller in size than the dhyānāsana

<sup>59</sup> Marshall notes that the pilasters between the bays on the plinth are of “noticeably slender proportions and are composed not, as was often the case, of long perpendicular blocks of kañjūr let into the limestone walls, but of piles of small and neatly dressed pieces measuring about 9” x 3½” on the face, and presenting almost the appearance of bricks.” The base mouldings were rounded in stucco; the stone was beveled with channels to which the stucco could adhere. Marshall (1951), p. 358.

<sup>60</sup> The Chinese bronze Buddha in dhyana mudrā with inscription dated 426 A.D. in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York mentions the Buddha as Maitreya. See Fig. 6.9d and Rhie (2002), figs. 2.76a-e.

<sup>61</sup> The pilaster on the front wall (south side) shows a standing Bodhisattva, so the small dhyānāsana Buddha theme does not seem to carry over on the front wall, which may, in fact have its own separate iconography—at least this is one indication of that. Another possibility is that there was a certain amount of repair to the stucco images even before the site was abandoned, and the repaired images may have assumed a different iconography for one reason or another.



Buddhas above, both of which sit on lotus pedestals while the smaller lowest Buddhas on both pilasters shown in Fig. 8.8b sit directly on the base molding of the pilaster. The lower small Buddha on the east pilaster (facing at the right) has the dharmachakra mudrā (Fig. 8.8b). This mudrā also appears on some of the pilaster Buddhas at the main stupa of Jauliāñ (Fig. 8.5g). Depending on which pilasters contained the small Buddhas, it is possible that there may have been three possible circuits (or more) of Buddhas on the pilasters alone (with the niches being another, separate circuit), with each circuit consisting of the 28 Buddhas. That is, in circumambulating the podium, one could count 28 Buddhas on the lower position, then 28 Buddhas in the middle position and 28 Buddhas in the upper position of the pilasters. This is one possibility, but there may well be other possibilities or even multiple levels of interpretation, just as we can see in the case of Karadong Temple B discussed above. This very interesting and important stupa at Mohrā Morādu has the potential to yield results with further consideration and research, much beyond the scope of this book. However, the rather clear arrangement of the 28 images on the drum of the Mohrā Morādu main stupa lends considerable support for the idea that these stucco reliefs had a specific religious connotation and function and that this is probably the case for other arrangements, such as seen on the main stupa of Jauliāñ as well.

### 3. Dating

Generally, the dating of the stucco sculptures on both the Jauliāñ and Mohrā Morādu main stupas has tended to follow that of John Marshall, who considered them to be a late addition, ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century. However, at times he seems to suggest a late 4<sup>th</sup> century dating in some of his statements, and he tended to favor a slightly earlier dating for the Mohrā Mohrā sculptures than for those on the Jauliāñ main stupa. According to Kurt Behrendt, “At Jauliāñ, the main *stūpa* base was embellished with a variety of heterogeneous, individually commissioned Buddha and bodhisattva images, which appear to date to the end of phase III or to phase IV.”<sup>62</sup> Specifically with respect to the sculptures of the Jauliāñ main stupa Behrendt suggests that their “large scale argues for a late date, as does their style, which is comparable to, for example, in-situ sculptures in the Dharmarājikā N18 shrine ...”<sup>63</sup> Given the importance of dating in determining the appearance of certain iconography in Gandhāra, the few points offered below are an effort to contribute to the study of this difficult problem. Certainly one must also be aware that images could have been replaced at later times and their present condition has been subjected to restoration.

#### a. Sculptures of the Jauliāñ Main Stupa

The remains of the large stucco Buddhas of the south and east walls of the main stupa at Jauliāñ show massive bodies and a bold patterning of pleats in the form-fitting robe depiction (Figs. 8.5b, c, f).<sup>64</sup> The central Buddha of the south wall of the main stupa is shown in an early *in-situ* photo in Fig. 8.8c.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 160. Behrendt’s Phase III is ca. 200–5<sup>th</sup> century; Phase IV is ca. 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century. Though I am not aware of Bodhisattva images among the stucco sculptures of the main stupa, certainly there are examples in the images of the shrines around the main stupa.

<sup>63</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 160 note 57.

<sup>64</sup> According to Marshall these sculptures are made by a core of kañjūr blocks and mud with an outer covering of lime plaster. Marshall (1921), p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> This central Buddha sculpture of the south wall was removed, renovated and placed in the Taxila Museum (Marshall (1951), III, pl. 154a) with the upper part of the body remade and a head (probably not the original) placed on it (See Fig. 8.5d). Though some portions of the drapery around the left arm and over the pedestal appear to remain faithful to the *in situ* image, the upper torso is of doubtful proportions and should not be taken as a model.

This *in-situ* view reveals a style consonant with the other large seated stucco Buddhas in Figs. 8.5b, c, f on the south and east walls of the main stupa taken in 1975 (after restoration). Clear characteristics of the Fig. 8.8c Buddha sculpture include the rather stocky and broad proportions, thick arms that have a swelling curvature to the outer contour, and chest that is not much defined for its musculature. Further, the drapery folds over the chest have two raised, rounded edges set closely together near the shoulder but splitting into a more widely open form over the abdomen. The folds over the upper arms have a rather broad pleat that makes relatively pronounced curves over the arm while the folds over the left forearm have some irregularity and curve around the arm only to bend as the cloth re-sets on the leg. The left leg has parallel patterns of the pleats with raised, rounded edges that open into a wider pleat as the robe stretches over and around the leg, knee and thigh. The drape of the robe over the center of the crossed legs has a definite and pronounced semi-circular configuration of parallel pleats. A particularly notable feature of these large Buddhas is the prominent, diagonal cluster of pleats fanning out from under the left hand towards the pedestal to form a tight triangular cluster of expanding pleats that are individually separated by deep grooves. A similar motif appears in the clay seated Buddha in Alcove B20 in Court B at Kālawān (Fig. 8.8f), one of the great monasteries in Taxila, though the Kālawān Buddha would appear to date earlier (discussed below). As the hems of the robe fall over the pedestal in the Jauliāñ Buddha, they become jagged, angular and irregular. Such jagged hems are known in the clay sculpture of the Bactrian region, particularly as seen in the standing Buddha from Temple 2, Room 3 at Delverzin-tepe, datable to ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The temple, which is the later of the two temples excavated at the site, dates before the destruction of the site which is estimated around the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>66</sup>

Judging from some major stucco images from the Bactrian sites (around present-day Termez, just north of the Oxus River that divides Afghanistan from Uzbekistan) as well as Taxila, we can perhaps begin to understand the outlines of a chronology to which we can relate the large Jauliāñ sculptures. In the large torso of a seated Buddha (probably in *abhyā mudrā*) from a large courtyard niche of Complex D at Kara-tepe (Fig. 8.8d) can be seen similar massive body structure with large, heavy arms drawn out to the sides. The folds of the drapery are portrayed as distinctly individual, beautifully curved, rib folds which do not group together. This style is very close to that of the Haṣṭnagar Buddha with a date of year 384, which if calculated according to the Old Shaka date, would be 262 A.D. (Fig. 8.8e).<sup>67</sup> The linear elements in both the Kara-tepe Complex D Buddha and the Haṣṭnagar Buddha particularly display the beauty of long lines with relatively loose tension. By comparison, the Buddha from B21 at Kalawan monastery in Fig. 8.8f reveals increased tension of line and a tendency to group the lines into pairs that emphasize one heavy line and one delicate line.<sup>68</sup> The Jauliāñ Buddha, on the other hand, shows an advanced form of this pairing of lines as the basic linear formula for the entire image. The patterning is more repetitive and uniform and lacks the nuanced variations of the Kalawan Buddha, even noticeable in the projecting triangle of cloth with deeply grooved pleats noted above. It is likely that the Kalawan Buddha dates later than the Kara-tepe and Haṣṭnagar Buddha of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century

<sup>66</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 200-201, fig. 3.33a.

<sup>67</sup> See Rhie (1999), pp. 186-188 for more detailed discussion of the Kara-tepe Complex D Buddha.

<sup>68</sup> According to Marshall, who excavated the site, "the quadrangle B was a later construction, built exclusively of semi-ashlar masonry." He calls the masonry "typical of 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century work." The alcove or niche contained six images all made of clay, half of which had been burnt to terracotta. The Buddha and the Bodhisattva on the Buddha's right side, however, had "true terracotta, intentionally fired in a kiln." Marshall (1951), pp. 334, 337-338.

and that the Jauliān large Buddhas were made later than the Kalawan Buddha, which if we estimate to be ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, would indicate a general dating for the Jauliān Buddha in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>69</sup>

Marshall found a number of stucco Buddha heads around the main stupa at Jauliān.<sup>70</sup> Two in particular were especially well preserved, one in Fig. 8.8h (with slight restoration). These reveal a lotus shaped eye with lowered eye lid and with marked curvature of the upper and lower lid tapering to a sharp point on the outer end. The end of the nose is repaired, but others from the site show a sharp tip. The mouth lends a serious expression and is finely outlined with a delicate raised edge. The lower lip is slightly larger, but does not have the pendulous shape seen in the Gupta styles of Central India, even as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century, such as appears in the stone Buddha of year 60 from Bodhgaya. The waves of the hair are delicate and finely fashioned with a light, loose touch, but without deep modeling. The edge of the hairline with the forehead is very thin, sharp and delicate with a slight dip towards a point in the center, but not as pronounced as in some cases in (probably) later Gandhāran sculptures. The shape of the eye appears in some images of Gandhāra, such as the stucco Buddha head in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art,<sup>71</sup> and occurs in the Buddha paintings from Kara-dong (near Khotan) of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.27). The Jauliān Buddha head stylistically would seem to be earlier than the head of the B20 Buddha from Kalawan (Fig. 8.8g), which has more open eyes and softer and less patterned waves of hair. Also, it is a terracotta head rather than stucco like the one from Jauliān, and terracotta is generally considered to be the earlier material.

The small pilaster Buddhas, as seen *in-situ* in Figs. 8.5f, g show both the dhyāna and dharmachakra mudrās, as noted above. Regarding the robe portrayal in these images, those with the dharmachakra mudrā have the right shoulder bare and those with the dhyāna mudrā have both shoulders covered, as is typical among Gandhāran Buddha images in general. An image such as the upper Buddha (with the dharmachakra mudrā) in Fig. 8.5g also shows an asymmetrical pulling of the robe over the legs. This style is seen in the Group 6 Amitāyus Buddha stucco sculpture dated 424 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 6.8a, b).

#### b. *Sculptures at Mohrā Morādu*

Marshall recognized the panel on the south wall of the podium of the main stupa of Mohrā Morādu in Fig. 8.8b (panel #5 on the plan in Fig. 8.7c) as one of the most beautiful of the surviving sculptures at this site. It, along with the others from the south wall, were removed to the Taxila Museum.<sup>72</sup> While, as Marshall also noted, the style of the podium sculptures is close to that of the stucco sculptures of the main stupa at Jauliān, we can note that there is greater attention paid to both the subtleties of muscular modeling of the form and to the delicacy and clarity of detailing of the garment folds when compared with the slightly bolder and simpler forms and drapery configurations of the Jauliān large

<sup>69</sup> Some other features can reinforce this dating for the Jauliān Buddha. The manner in which the pleat patterns on the legs curve outward over the knees is akin to, but somewhat milder than, some drapery patterns in Gandhāran art, including some stone images (J. Rhi, "Bodhisattvas in Gandhāran Art: An Aspect of Mahāyana in Gandhāran Buddhism," in Brancaccio and Behrendt (2006), fig. 7.15) which show similar flat, raised pleat forms pulled tightly across the body over the knees, chest or legs. Also, the pleats over the left arm of the seated Buddha in *Ibid.*, fig. 7.15 shows a similar form as those on the legs of the south wall Buddha in Fig. 8.8c.

<sup>70</sup> Marshall found "seven more or less intact and others broken were found reposing on the floor..." These were of "excellent stucco finished with slip and paint and modelled with both skill and feeling..." Marshall (1921), p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Rhi (1999), fig. 5.47a.

<sup>72</sup> Marshall (1951), III, pls. 150-152.

Buddhas (Figs. 8.8b and 8.8c). For example, the execution of the raised pleats have a sophistication and sharpness that speaks of the height of development and that equal the finest of the Gandhāran sculptural styles, as seen in an earlier stage in the stone Buddha torso in Fig. 8.8i, which may date within a range from late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century. An intermediate stage may be represented by the stucco Buddha in the niche by the entrance to Mohrā Morādu in Fig. 8.8j. Elements of this niche imagery relate to some figures from the Dalverzin-tepe site in southern Uzbekistan. The style of the Buddha's face and its features are quite close to those of one of the major Bodhisattva finds from Temple 2 datable to ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, though the latter is more powerfully fashioned.<sup>73</sup> We can also make an observation that the image style of panel # 5 on the south wall (Fig. 8.8b) shows affinities with some Chinese sculptures discussed in Vol. II as dating ca. 430's. Notably, the clustering of refined parallel rib lines and creases seen in the drapery of the right attendant Bodhisattva of panel #5 (Fig. 8.8k) can be closely compared with the similar technique in the bronze cross-ankled Bodhisattva in the Nelson-Atkins Museum (Fig. 8.8l), dating ca. 430's.<sup>74</sup> This could be an indication that this style was current in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and might support a dating for the Mohrā Morādu stucco images around that time. Another interesting factor is the sensitivity of the delineation of the muscles of the exposed torso as seen in Fig. 8.8b and that of the colossal stone Bodhisattva in the Met Museum (Fig. 8.8m), which Kurt Behrendt dates to the period of colossal images (phase IV, around the 5<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>75</sup> It is possible to see the style of this magnificent stone Bodhisattva torso as having features seen in Chinese painting at Tun-huang (especially the unusual oval shaping of the chest muscles, seen in the paintings of Cave 254 ca. 470's) and the exquisitely refined qualities of the jewelry, which can be seen in some of the Mathurā sculptures of ca. mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. The delicacy of the linear carving in both, as well as the sensitivity to muscular form and nuance, suggests a naturalistic approach that may parallel the rise of the classic Gupta styles of Central India. These factors can afford clues that help stabilize the dating of these Gandhāran sculptures, while understanding that more such factors are needed to gain a more solid footing for the dating of Gandhāran sculptures.

One further example will show the apparent linkage of some of the Mohrā Morādu sculptures with some sculptures from the Constantinople area of around the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>76</sup> The statue of a Magistrate from the Baths at Aphrodisias (in Turkey) and now in Istanbul (Fig. 8.8o) has boldly sweeping folds of the robe, especially as pulled across the left side of his body where the raised, flattened pleats broaden rather dramatically, their shape taking a bold, reverse curvature that is striking for the style. While there is some similarity with the pleat technique in the large Buddhas of the Jauliān main stupa, it is even more prominent in a standing figure from the podium of Mohrā Morādu in Fig. 8.8n. The Magistrate sculpture from Aphrodisias is dated by Bianchi-Bandinelli to ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>77</sup> This style and particular manner of making the pleats is of limited duration in Gandhāran art,

<sup>73</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 202-203, fig. 3.36b.

<sup>74</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 483-487.

<sup>75</sup> K. Behrendt, *The Art of Gandhāra in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 2007, p. 72 and fig. 54.

<sup>76</sup> Because certain mannerisms and motifs can identify a particular period of usage or a particular "school" or "hand" or "artistic style", I believe it is useful in this case to search for any matches from other areas that can inform the currency of a certain way of portraying an element, such as the mode of depicting the drapery, the certain kind of jewelry, etc. In the case of the stucco sculptures at Jauliān and Mohrā Morādu, there are figures at both sites which quite clearly relate to a style of sculpture known in the area of Constantinople ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>77</sup> Though the statue is not specifically dated, he places it within a close analysis of the sculptural schools and remains of other statues of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and judges its slightly later style to be ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century. R. Bianchi-Bandinelli, *Rome: The Late Empire (Roman Art A.D. 200-400)*, New York, 1971, p. 363.

and its stylistic linkage with the sculptural style of the area of Constantinople supports a similar dating around the early 5<sup>th</sup> century for this Mohṛā Morādu image. Not all of the images on the podium use this style, which indicates that there are actually quite a variety of different styles and schools of artists at work at the same time, which would be normal if this were a large project requiring a large group of artists working simultaneously.

Stylistically, the stucco imagery on the main stupa at Jauliāñ may pre-date the more elaborate styles of the Mohṛā Morādu images, judging from the above observations. The Jauliāñ images could be around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and those at Mohṛā Morādu slightly later, in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Also, from the observations made above, it is likely that they derive from two different artistic “schools.” This could be a hypothesis for further investigation.

#### 4. *Conclusions: Jauliāñ and Mohṛā Morādu Main Stupas*

What we can say with regard to the iconography is that sets of multiple Buddhas appear to underlie much of the iconography of the stupa decoration in the 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century in some monasteries in Taxila. One main source for the decoration of the main stupas, which are being embellished later than their original construction, may relate to the *Buddhavaṃsa* chronology of Buddhas and/or the *Bhadrakalpika* and perhaps some of the Āgamas, or even other texts. By around the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century there may also be a pronounced move towards incorporating elements of cosmic space, which may be construed to have a Mahāyāna thrust. Even though we are dealing with imperfect remains, it appears that these primary stupas at sites like Jauliāñ and Mohṛā Morādu are incorporating multiple levels of thought, perhaps including the traditional and the emerging Mahāyāna ideas and presenting them in complex, interlocking schemes involving the concepts of space and time within both a Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhist context, but tending towards the cosmic dimensions and multiplicity of images that one can associate with the early Mahāyāna sutras as known from the Chinese translations prior to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. It also seems that the methods of worship or practice are taken into account and that these monuments provide in their rich imagery, mostly in stucco, a more strikingly visual array of imagery suitable to differing kinds and levels of practice, among which the sets of multiple Buddhas play a crucial role at this particular juncture from ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, as is seen in some developments of Gandhāran Buddhist art. These two sites also appear to incorporate two differing artistic schools in their stucco sculptures, which, however, can be traced to earlier developments in Gandhāra as well as in the important sites of southern Uzbekistan, such as Kara-tepe and Delverzin-tepe.

#### C. *Miniature and Subsidiary Stupas at Mohṛā Morādu and Jauliāñ*

One miniature stupa from Mohṛā Morādu and some of the subsidiary stupas in the main stupa court and lower stupa court at Jauliāñ offer evidences regarding the sets of multiple Buddhas as they appear in Gandhāran art. Some also have a particularly interesting and pertinent relation with Buddhist art remaining in China from a comparable period. Here we will make a preliminary examination of the most relevant examples, though it is becoming increasingly clear that these subsidiary stupas are worthy of much more thorough study. We begin with one especially notable example from Mohṛā Morādu and then move to the prolific group of subsidiary stupas at Jauliāñ.



### 1. Stucco Stupa from Cell 9 at Mohrā Morādu

The famous and beautiful stucco stupa (Hgt. 12 ft.) in monastery Cell 9 at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.9a) was found by Marshall “almost complete in every detail.”<sup>78</sup> It has a circular plan with multiple levels, a beautifully proportioned, slightly more than hemispherical dome, and seven stucco umbrellas (chat-tras) originally held on an iron rod, which had already disintegrated when the stupa was found.<sup>79</sup> The core “is of kañjūr, and the molding and decorations are of stucco once decorated with colors (crimson, blue and yellow).” The edges of the umbrellas, which were all “threaded separately”, were “pierced with holes intended for streamers, garlands or bells.” Marshall judged that this stupa could have been a special memorial for a revered member of the saṅghā, since it was found in a cell of the monastery which was made, in his estimation, two centuries earlier than the stupa.<sup>80</sup>

For ease of identification, the various levels below the dome, all of which are circular, are numbered from Level 1 to Level 5 (see sketch in Fig. 8.9b). On the circular bottom platform (Level 1) a series of tiny atlantes and elephants alternate in holding up Level 2, which is the first main (and largest) base level and can probably be considered as the plinth or base holding the stupa proper above (Levels 3-5). Level 2 has base moldings, a mid-section with pilasters and image niches, and a bracketed cornice (forming an eave-like structure). The mid-section is divided into eight bays by eight short corinthian pilasters. Each of the eight bays contains a niche, alternating trabeated and trilobed, and each niche contains a seated image, one of which is a dhyānāsana Bodhisattva in a trabeated niche as clearly seen in Fig. (8.9c, color Pl. XI). This Bodhisattva is in all likelihood Maitreya. The others are probably all Buddhas, but I have been unable to obtain complete views of the stupa which show all the niches, and I am not aware of any detailed written description of the number and type of images. However, what is clear from available photographs is that the layout appears to support a total of eight evenly distributed niches, that the two niches on Maitreya’s left each contain a dhyānāsana Buddha, and the two niches on Maitreya’s right both contain seated Buddhas (Figs. 8.9a, d). The Buddha immediately adjacent to Maitreya’s right has the dharmachakra mudrā, but the next Buddha (in the trabeated niche) is in the dhyāna mudrā.<sup>81</sup> With regard to the latter, the uṣṇīṣa and the line of the hair on the forehead are clearly those of a Buddha and not of a Bodhisattva. In that case, this row is probably not a sequence of alternating Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The disposition of the niches strongly indicates that there are eight images and that these are most likely the seven-Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva as the eighth image. Thus, the Buddha in the dharmachakra mudrā (Figs. 8.9c, 8.9e) to Maitreya’s right would be the first Buddha of the series, that is Vipasyin, and the Buddha in dhyāna mudrā to Maitreya’s left would be Śākyamuni. The identities of the images of this level would then be as follows, starting with the Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā, Vipasyin, followed by Śikhin, Viśabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and ending with Maitreya Bodhisattva.

The seven Buddhas (the six predecessors of Śākyamuni) are a well-known set from the earliest texts of the Pali Canon (the *Mahāpadāna Suttanta*, no. 14 of the *Dirghanikāya*).<sup>82</sup> They appear in art

<sup>78</sup> Marshall (1951), p. 361.

<sup>79</sup> The umbrellas were lying at the side of the stupa when found by Marshall. Marshall (1951), p. 361.

<sup>80</sup> Marshall (1951), p. 361.

<sup>81</sup> This point is observable from published photos that show this niche from ¾ view. See especially D. Faccenna, *Il fregio figurato dello stūpa principale nell’area sacra Buddhista di Saidu Sharif I (Swat, Pakistan)*, Rome, 2001, pl. 147a.

<sup>82</sup> *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, trans. and ed. by T. W. Rhys Davids, Vol. III, London, 1977, pp. 4-41. Other recensions of this text are preserved in Chinese translation (*Daizōkyō*, Vol. I, (T 1, 2, 3, 4, and 125).



as early as ca. 180 B.C. in the reliefs at Bhārhut Stupa in Central India where the six Buddhas prior to Śākyamuni are represented by their respective enlightenment trees and are each identified by an inscription.<sup>83</sup> These Buddhas also appear in the *Buddhavarṇa* with a formulaic description of their history within the lineage of the 24 predecessors of Śākyamuni. Regarding the six predecessors of Śākyamuni, the first three are from previous eons and the last three (four, including Śākyamuni) are from our present “Good Eon”, i.e., the Bhadrakalpa.<sup>84</sup> The eighth image on the Level 2 base of the Cell 9 stupa is Maitreya in Bodhisattva form.

Above Level 2, which is probably the main base, rises a further series of three circular levels before the rising of the dome (Figs. 8.9a, b). In Level 3 there are similarly eight bays formed by corinthian pilasters as in Level 2, but the pilasters are shorter than those of Level 2 (Fig. 8.9c, color Pl. XI). From the available photographs it would appear that there are also eight seated single figures, one in each of the bays, but without a separate trabeated or trilobed niche. All are probably Buddhas in the dhyāna mudrā, but this is not totally clear without further visual confirmation. Above is also a bracket cornice.

The next level (Level 4) is decorated with very short pilasters as well as brackets and moldings, but there are no image figures on this level (Figs. 8.9a -d). The last of the levels (Level 5) is a narrow zone both without demarcation of pilasters and without images. However, there appears to be the broken remains of a square plaque-like form on the same vertical axis as the Vipassīn sculpture in dharmachakra mudrā on Level 2 (Figs. 8.9a and f). This could have originally been intended to indicate the center front of the stupa. If so, it would constitute another sign that the Level 2 (main base) images begin with the dharmachakra image at Maitreya’s right.

The two rows of eight niches with images (Levels 2 and 3) respectively probably refer to the seven-Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva (on Level 2), and the eight images (probably Buddhas) as a repetition of the seven Buddhas with Maitreya (possibly as the eighth Buddha), and/or the “Buddhas of the eight directions” (on Level 3). It is not yet clear whether eight Buddha images (or even seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva) also represent the eight directions of space at this time in Gandhāran art, but it is worthwhile to note that the phrase “the eight directions” and “Buddhas of the eight directions” appear in many early Mahāyāna sutras that were translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425. If this directional component is indeed indicated here (there is more discussion of this point below), then there would seem to be the incorporation of Mahāyāna ideas of cosmic space together with the time element of the lineage of Buddhas.

Level 4, which has only eight pilasters and no images, and Level 5 with neither pilasters nor images (only a frontal plaque marker), are also uniquely different and conceivably could represent a different identity. It appears possible that the four upper distinct levels (Levels 2-5) designate differing levels of attainment or realization or world-view, according to the concepts and practice of Buddhism. For example, Level 2 with the seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva could represent the Desire Realm; Level 3 becomes more universal, perhaps indicating the Form Realm. The Level with pilasters but no images could be the Formless Realm with the highest level (Level 5) as the highest level of the Formless Realm (the peak of cyclic existence). The dome above these levels may indicate the Buddha’s Nirvāṇa.

<sup>83</sup> See A. Cunningham, *The Stupa of Bhārhut*, London, 1879 (reprint New Delhi, 1998), pls. XXX.1, XXX.3, XXIX.1-4 and inscriptions respectively on pp. 135 (#49), 134 (#28), 137 (#68), 132 (#3), 137 (#72), 132 (#11). Similarly, reliefs at the Great Stupa of Sāñcī (ca. 50 B.C.) represent them by their tree.

<sup>84</sup> Vipassīn is the 19<sup>th</sup> (91 eons ago), Sikhin the 20<sup>th</sup> (31 eons ago), Vessabhū the 21<sup>st</sup> (31 eons ago), Kakusandha the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Koṇāgamana the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Kassapa the 24<sup>th</sup>. Śākyamuni is the 25<sup>th</sup>. For details, see *Buddhavarṇa*, pp. 74-96.

Though this remains in the area of conjecture at present, it would seem to be a fruitful avenue for further consideration, and would perhaps shed light on the representations of doctrine and practice of the certain aspect of Gandhāran Buddhism practiced at Mohrā Morādu at a particular time (date is discussed below).

Though the design of the various levels of the Cell 9 stucco stupa are similar in some basic structural elements to many of the subsidiary stupas around the main stupa at Jauliāñ, the Jauliāñ stupas have some notable differences: they invariably have a square base (or series of square bases and levels) and are generally much more elaborately adorned. The quality of simplicity and restraint in the Mohrā Morādu circular base stupa could suggest an earlier dating than most if not all of the Jauliāñ subsidiary stupas (discussed below). It seems that the Cell 9 stupa may date in 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In comparison with the miniature stupa from Pippala (Fig. 8.9g), the Cell 9 stupa would appear more complex in its meaning. The Pippala stupa, with one Buddha (presumably at each of the four directions) may equate iconographically more closely with the four direction Buddhas of Dharmarājikā Stupas K1 and N4, probably dating ca. 200 to before mid- 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 8.3b) .

As a final point, it is of particular interest to consider some of the aspects of the Cell 9 stucco stupa at Mohrā Morādu with respect to the group of miniature stone stupas from the Northern Liang kingdom (known as the Liang chou stone stupas) found in Chiu-ch'üan and Tun-huang in western Kansu province. This important group of stone stupas, mostly found in the 1950's, have inscriptions dating from the 420's and 430's under the Northern Liang.<sup>85</sup> They have been studied by a number of scholars,<sup>86</sup> and are a very important dated resource concerning the iconography of the stupa and the sets of multiple Buddhas.<sup>87</sup> They all contain at least one row (one has two rows) of eight images consisting of the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva around the lower part of the dome of the stupa. One well-preserved and typical example, the stupa of Kao Shan-mu 高善穆 from Chiu-ch'üan dated 428, can be seen in Fig. 7.42 and a rubbing of the main part of the stupa in Fig. 8.10a. The stupa of □ Chi-te □ 吉德 datable to 426 from Tun-huang actually has the names of each of the seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva inscribed next to each figure, thus clearly indicating the order of reading and the exact identity of the images (Fig. 8.10b). Most of these stupas have each of the eight images directly aligned with the eight directions of space (four cardinal directions and four intermediate directions), which are identified by the Chinese trigrams and trigram images that are carved in each panel around the octagonal base of the stupa (Figs. 7.42, 8.10a). Thus in this group of Liang chou stone stupas the eight images (seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva) and their reading order are clearly identified and, in addition, are clearly linked with the concept of directional space through the usage of the trigrams and/or trigram images, which follow the ancient cosmological system of China as known from at least the Chou Dynasty (1027–206 B.C.) and the classic of the *I Ching* (Classic of Changes).<sup>88</sup> This octagonal base, the directions of which are identified by using the trigrams and trigram images, is linked in parallel construction to the circular dome with its eight Buddhist image niches, which

<sup>85</sup> Two are from Turfan dating a decade or so later under the Northern Liang which was re-established in Turfan after their defeat by the T'o-pa Wei in 439.

<sup>86</sup> See especially Yin Kuang-ming, *Pei-liang shih-t'a yen-chiu* (The Stone Stupas of the Northern Liang Dynasty), Taipei, 2000.

<sup>87</sup> These will be extensively studied in Vol. IV of this series of *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*.

<sup>88</sup> For more specific discussion on this factor from the Chinese perspective, see Eugene Wang, "What do trigrams have to do with Buddhas? The Northern Liang stupas as a hybrid spatial model," *Res*, No. 35, (spring, 1999), pp. 70-91.

are set out in the chronological lineage as follows: starting from the east direction, which is linked to Vipāśyin, and moving clockwise (circumambulatory direction) to the southeast:

- 1) East: Vipāśyin (trigram First Son)
- 2) Southeast: Śikhin (trigram First Daughter)
- 3) South: Viśabhū (trigram Second Daughter)
- 4) Southwest: Krakucchanda (trigram Mother)
- 5) West: Kanakamuni (trigram Youngest Daughter)
- 6) Northwest: Kāśyapa (trigram Father)
- 7) North: Śākyamuni (trigram Second Son)
- 8) Northeast: Maitreya Bodhisattva (trigram Youngest Son).

In Fig. 8.10a we can see the alignment of the trigram figures with the seven Buddhas and a cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva in dharmachakra mudrā (an early form of this mudrā). Between is a circular drum which contains a carved portion of a sutra text concerning cause and effect, a dedicatory statement, the donor's name, and date. The sutra text is a short portion from the *Tseng-i a-han ching* 增壹阿含經 (*Ekottarāgama*, The First But One Āgama), translated in the summer of 384 and spring of 385 in Ch'ang-an as recited from memory by Dharmanandi.<sup>89</sup> This text is one of the major works of the Sarvāstivādin School, a Hīnayāna school very prominent in Gandhāra in the period of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

As indicated by these stone stupas of Liang chou, it may be possible to think that some Gandhāran stupas also equate the sets of multiple Buddha images with cardinal and intermediate directions. Possibly this stupa in Cell No. 9 at Mohrā Morādu with two rows of eight images can also be interpreted as both referring to the chronological lineage of Buddhas and to the eight directions of space (i.e., all space). These may be expressing elements of Mahāyāna conjoined with the traditional lineage of Buddhas (though with the inclusion of Maitreya, there is a late emphasis, a factor which may also have influenced the addition of Maitreya as a later addition to the *Buddhavaṃsa*). The Northern Liang stupas present a similar message, but expressed in a uniquely Chinese way using the trigrams to indicate and specifically identify the space element. It may be that the underlying concept of the Northern Liang stone stupas relates to ideas expressed in Indian Buddhist art, such as seen in some examples surviving in Gandhāra. Thus, a stupa such as the Cell 9 example may be reflecting a combining of Hīnayāna with some Mahāyāna ideas or emphasis. There may also be an element of traditional Indian astrological concepts of space, such as seen in the Northern Liang stupas using the traditional Chinese astrological concepts in the form of the trigrams and trigram images. This could be a fruitful avenue for further research. Certainly, the Mohrā Morādu Cell 9 stucco stupa helps to confirm that the imagery on Gandhāran stupas are likely to be specific, meaningful sets of Buddhist images. If they can be de-coded, and the dates established, then there is much to be learned about the Buddhism at certain times and in certain places in the Gandhāran region.

<sup>89</sup> This translation was apparently lost, but a later redaction survives by Gautama Saṅgadeva made in 397 (1<sup>st</sup> year of Lung-an 隆安) at Lu shan 廬山 under the Eastern Chin (T 215). Korean Catalogue, K649. Also see Rhie (2001), p. 316 and note 42.

## 2. *Subsidiary Stupas at Jauliāñ*

The smaller, subsidiary stupas located around the main stupa at Jauliāñ afford a fertile group of objects for study of groups of multiple images. They are so varied and interesting that they are worthy of much further study than can be presented here. However, from examining a few we can begin to apprehend how these stupas may hold the key to understanding some possible practices and some ideas emerging in Gandhāra in the apparently, extremely active period of the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time we can also obtain some clues concerning certain groups of images that appear in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169.

The main stupa at Jauliāñ is surrounded on the upper level by 21 smaller, subsidiary or votive stupas. Several others appear on the lower stupa court (D1-D5) and one in the western court (Fig. 8.4). A pertinent selection will be discussed here, generally in chronological order as much as possible. Among the twenty-one subsidiary stupas arranged close to the main stupa, all had lost their domes by the time of Marshall's excavations, though some retained the ruined remains of the lower portion. In Marshall's judgment A15 and A11 were the oldest among the subsidiary stupas. Both have a high square base (podium) with large seated stucco images without pilasters or niches.

### a. *Stupa A15*

Stupa A15 is located on the west side of the main stupa (Figs. 8.4, 8.11a, color Pl. IX). According to Marshall, in all the subsidiary stupas at Jauliāñ, the "core" is of "rough rubble, faced as a rule with soft kañjūr stone in which the main features of the decoration are blocked out and then finished off in lime plaster, the details of the architectural members and the relief being modeled throughout in stucco." Specifically with respect to Stupa A15 he says "the plinth is faced throughout with large diaper masonry [an early form of diaper masonry, which is earlier than semi-ashlar] similar to that employed in the older parts of the monastery ..."<sup>90</sup>

When it was excavated, Stupa A15 was intact up to the level of the drum/dome, though the dome itself was lost. It has a single story square podium (plinth) with simple moldings but without pilasters and no "basement"<sup>91</sup> or intervening levels between the podium and the drum/dome. This appears to be quite an early form of the square base stupa and earlier than the square base stupas K1, N4 and J1 at Dharmarājikā (Figs. 8.3b, e). Some rather large stucco images survive on the podium (Figs. 8.11a-g), which Marshall thought could have been added later.<sup>92</sup> Behrendt notes that, "In late phase II [i.e., ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.] Jauliāñ had a monastery, a compact main stupa and one small stupa A15 ..."<sup>93</sup> Fitzsimmons calls Stupa A15 "the earliest stupa to be built next to the main stupa," and notes that "the walls of the single-story square podium are largely covered with a plaster surface decorated with seated

<sup>90</sup> Marshall (1921), p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> As defined by Fitzsimmons, a basement is "a platform for the podium of a stupa. When present, it stands below the podium base and has a perimeter larger than that of the podium. It can be distinguished from a podium by the absence of foot molding or cornice." Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 14-15.

<sup>92</sup> "...it is likely that this is one of the earliest among the small stupas, although it was redecorated at a later age." Marshall (1951), p. 372. Also see Marshall (1921), p. 7, where he states: "...it is likely that this is one of the earliest among the small stupas, although it was no doubt refaced and redecorated at a later age." Further, he states in (1951), p. 524: "This is probably one of the earliest of the smaller stūpas at Jauliāñ, and it is not unlikely that the form of decoration found here represents an earlier stage than that found in most of the neighboring stūpas (e.g. D1, D4, A16), but, if this is so, the images of the Buddha must have been remade in the fifth century A.D. since it is quite certain that, as they stand, they are among the latest reliefs on the site, being both stereotyped in style and coarse in workmanship."

<sup>93</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 157.

figures, but masonry is exposed at the northeast corner and appears to resemble that of the main stupa, Type 7.” Also, Stupa A15 was “built at a sufficient distance from the main stupa to allow for easy access to all sides,” unlike the “neighboring stupas”, which were “built so as to preclude access to their east [the side facing the main stupa] sides, and they are of a radically different design.”<sup>94</sup>

i. Description and Discussion of the Iconography of the Images

Though published descriptions and photo documentation are not complete or detailed for this stupa,<sup>95</sup> those that are available together with some photos I took at the site in 1975 and others taken by Kurt Behrendt, who kindly allowed me to use them here, can provide some working assessments of this important stupa.<sup>96</sup> From these a reconstruction of the stupa is as follows:

1) East side (facing the main stupa) (Figs. 8.11a, b)<sup>97</sup>

Reading from right to left: three seated dhyānāsana Buddhas, one seated Bodhisattva (probably Maitya), and the broken shape of another, indistinguishable figure. The three Buddhas and the Bodhisattva all have an individual circular head halo and sit directly on the base molding. The Bodhisattva image, in dhyāna mudrā, is a little larger in size and its legs extend further into the molding than those of the three dhyānāsana Buddhas. The broken shape at the south end of the row is impossible to know, but one can surmise that it may have been a Buddha or Bodhisattva image or a donor image, similar to the one on the south side of the west wall (see below), which is a female.

2) South side (Fig. 8.11c)

This side has five seated images, all in dhyānāsana. They appear to all be Buddhas, but are of slightly differing sizes. Some sit on a raised rectangular pedestal, but one sits on the molding platform and the central image, which seems to be the smallest, has a ruined lower part, so it is not clear concerning the pedestal. All are presently headless and only two (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) have the remains of a circular head halo. Part of the right side of the torso of the seated Buddha at the west end (the 5<sup>th</sup> image) of the south side can be seen in Fig. 8.11e (at far right).

3) West side (Figs. 8.11d, e, f)

This side has five main images and one standing female donor image (on the south end, Fig. 8.11e). The five main images are all Buddhas. The three larger ones are in the center with dhyāna mudrā and seated directly on the molding platform without a pedestal. This group of three is flanked at each end by one smaller Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal in the dharmachakra mudrā. All the main images have a circular head halo remaining, but only the central Buddha still retains a head (Fig. 8.11f). The two small Buddhas in dharmachakra mudrā are seated on a quite simple, but relatively high relief, semi-circular lotus pedestal. The smooth, rounded form of the semi-circular lotus pedestal is of interest as a possible early form of this motif, different, for example from the flatter form used in the lotus pedestals of some of the stucco images at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.8b) and for some of the pilaster Buddhas on the main stupa at Jauliāñ (Fig. 8.8c), discussed above as probably dating around the early 5<sup>th</sup> century and late

<sup>94</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 33.

<sup>95</sup> Marshall gives a summary description as follows: the decoration “consists only of a series of figures of Buddha in the dhyānamudrā applied to an otherwise perfectly plain background.” Marshall (1921), p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> I am particularly grateful to Kurt Behrendt for sending me photos of this stupa from which to study and for kindly allowing me to publish them here.

<sup>97</sup> Other photos of these three Buddhas can be seen in L. Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, 2 vols., New York, 1929, and in Marshall (1951) and Marshall (1921).

4<sup>th</sup> century respectively. Further, the two smaller Buddhas on the west face of A15 clearly show an early form of the dharmachakra mudrā, that is, with the right hand fully clasping the fingers of the left hand (later renderings show much more of the fingers of the left hand, which drops lower and is not clasped so tightly).<sup>98</sup> These two features tend to indicate a relatively early dating for the stucco imagery on A15, though there is always the possibility of some individual later replacements or repairs. However, the sturdy, solid volume of the lotus pedestals and of the image forms has some reference to the sculptures datable to ca. 400 at Udyagiri near Sāñci in Central India, which would tend to support a late 4<sup>th</sup> century date for the A15 sculptures (Fig. 6.14e).

The standing female is gracefully portrayed. She appears to be a donor holding an offering (or reliquary container?) in both hands in front. The figure is modeled in well rounded high relief with a gentle tribhaṅga posture. She wears a blouse/tunic bound with a band under her breasts, a long shawl that drapes low around her right knee, and a long skirt that covers her feet. This kind of garb is known from some of the earliest stone sculptures of Gandhāra.<sup>99</sup> She appears to be standing on a plain circular pedestal. This donor could balance that of the (now unidentifiable) figure mostly ruined from the south end of the east side.

#### 4) North side (Fig 8.11g)

The north side is the most damaged, but probably had five main images. Two large ones remain and two smaller images, one at each end, are considerably damaged, though it would appear that they were originally located on the molding and not higher on the wall like the west wall two smaller Buddhas in Fig. 8.11d. One image is missing at the spot where the original masonry is exposed. Probably there was a third large seated Buddha at this now vacant place. All the surviving images are headless and the two large remaining images sit on a plain, low, rectangular pedestal.

#### ii. Iconographic Interpretation

Despite some damaged portions, perhaps some replacement images, and variations in the pedestals, it is possible to conjecture a reconstruction based on the remains we have for Stupa A15, which show a differing configuration for each of the four sides. Three sides (south, west and north) all contain five main images with the south and west sides being the most definite. The east side appears to have only four main images, but there is the remains of a fifth image of some kind. The only Bodhisattva on this stupa appears on the east side. The west side has the nearly complete remains of a female donor figure; the east side may have had a similar donor figure, and if so, it would probably be male, if it were to complement the female donor on the west side. Interestingly, on the east and south sides all the main figures are approximately the same size, but on the west and north sides the configuration appears to have been three larger Buddhas in the center and two smaller Buddhas at each end. The two smaller ones on the west side sit on a lotus pedestal in an early form of the dharmachakra mudrā.

In terms of the iconographic identity of the images of this stupa, several observations can be made:

1) The Bodhisattva appears only once on the stupa, on the east side as the fourth image, counting in clockwise order and reading from right to left (Figs. 8.11a, b). This Bodhisattva is likely to be Maitreya.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, G. v. Mitterwallner, "The Brussels Buddha from Gandhara of the Year 5", in Yaldiz and Lobo, *Investigating Indian Art: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin in May 1986*, Berlin, 1987, pp. 218-219.

<sup>99</sup> Sir John Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, Cambridge, 1960 (reprint New Delhi, 2000), Fig. 41 (from Takht-i-Bāhī, now in the British Museum) and Fig. 40 (from Guide's Mess, Mardān).



If the sequencing of images on this stupa is additive (that is, if there is one beginning point and all sides represent images in a lineage that is continuous around the whole stupa), then Maitreya, as the Bodhisattva, who will be the next Buddha, would most likely be the last image in the total. Considering this scheme for this stupa, Maitreya would be image 19, if all the images were added together. However, there is no particular known set of such a configuration. This strongly suggests that each of the four sides of Stupa A15 is a discrete representation. However, there may still be a relationship between each side that is not additive, but shows some other plan or idea.

2) There is a certain similarity between the east and south sides: both have basically the same size images for all their images. The difference is that the east wall has three Buddhas with one Bodhisattva and the south wall has five Buddhas. All images on these two sides are in dhyānāsana. Though the five images on the south wall are likely to be the first five Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa, the east wall shows three Buddhas with the Maitreya Bodhisattva and the remains of one other image which is not knowable now. The east wall is therefore more difficult to identify.

3) Both the west and north sides have five images (the west side has five Buddhas, and the north side appears to have had five Buddhas, only one—the 4<sup>th</sup> image—is destroyed). Both seem to have the same distinct arrangement: the three central Buddhas are larger and the two outer Buddha images are smaller in size. In the case of the west wall (Fig. 8.11d) the two outer Buddhas are seated on a lotus pedestal and both have the dharmachakra mudrā. There are no traces of lotus pedestals for the two outer images of the north wall, but even if there were originally (and are now missing), these two Buddhas are not in the dharmachakra mudrā but are in the dhyāna mudrā. In this kind of 3 + 2 configuration, the three central, larger images could be iconographically read in (at least) two different ways:

- a) as Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni, and Maitreya, the last three Buddhas of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (and perhaps simultaneously also representing the Buddhas of the Three Times of Past, Present and Future);
- b) as Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa, the first three Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa.

Further, in such a grouping of 3 + 2, the two smaller Buddhas would respectively be identified in scheme a) as the first two Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda and Kanakamuni), and in scheme b) as the last two of the Five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Śākyamuni and Maitreya).

Though it is difficult to conjecture which of these two schemes of identification are used in the west and north walls, possibly the usage of the lotus pedestals and the dharmachakra mudrā for the two Buddhas on the west wall could be an indication favoring scheme b), with Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa as the three large Buddhas and Śākyamuni and Maitreya as the two smaller Buddhas in dharmachakra mudrā seated on lotus pedestals.

The configuration of 3 + 2 grouping for five Buddhas is a form that can be obtained from the structure of the *Buddhavaṃsa*, which in Chapter XXVII speaks (in the words of Śākyamuni) of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa as follows:

verse 18: “In this Bhadda-eon there have been three leaders, Kakusandha, Konagamana and the leader Kassapa.”

verse 19: "I at the present time am the Self-Awakened One, and there will be Metteyya. These are the five Buddhas, wise ones, compassionate towards the world."<sup>100</sup>

If the structure indicated by the *Buddhavaṃsa* text is taken into consideration, then probably scheme b) is likely for the primary presentation of this iconography on the west wall, and scheme a) could be the scheme for the north side, if the idea of variation is taken into consideration. Iconographically speaking, we could be seeing the five Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa presented in three different ways on three sides of stupa A15 (all except the east side, which is difficult to reconcile at present, but may have also had five images). Further, since the sides of this stupa face the four cardinal directions, it could also imply the five Buddhas in at least three of the four directions of space and three Buddhas plus Maitreya (and possibly five images in total on the east wall) in the fourth direction.

The issue of the individual identity of each image on each wall is not simple to resolve. As indicated by the west and north sides (Figs. 8.11d and g), the reading is likely not chronologically linear. This means there are other principles regarding the order and identity, and there may even be differing principles for the order of images on each of the four sides. This issue will be a constant concern and will be continuously addressed as we proceed.

### iii. Technique, Inscriptions and Dating of the Images

According to Marshall, the images are "*appliqué*, the body of each figure having apparently been applied first, then the halo, and then the head, the whole being subsequently covered with a slip."<sup>101</sup> As observable in the photos, there is some variety in the images, halos and pedestals. It is as though most were made by a different artist and not simply mass produced. It is also possible that some are replacement images.

It is exceedingly interesting that there remain some Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions on the bases of some of the images. These cite individual donors, mostly bhikṣus. Kharoṣṭhī script is written from right to left, which confirms that the direction of reading the images is also right to left (clockwise, in the manner of circumambulation). These inscriptions are as follows:

- a) inscription written beneath the three seated Buddhas at the north end of the east side states: "The pious gift of the bhikṣu Budhadeva, friend of the holy community" (Saghamitrassa Budhadevasa bhichhusa danamukho);<sup>102</sup> Figs. 8.11b and 8.11h-i. Since this inscription extends under the three Buddhas, it is possible that the Bodhisattva (Maitreya) was separate.
- b) inscription under the seated Buddha at the east corner (1<sup>st</sup> image) of the south side (Fig. 8.11c): "The pious gift of the bhikṣu Budharakṣita" (Budharachhitassa bhichhusa danamukho); Fig. 8.11h-ii.
- c) inscription under the adjacent Buddha (2<sup>nd</sup> image) of the south side: "Pious gift of the bhikṣu Dhanamitra of the metropolis" ([Dha]ṇamitrassa bhichhu[sa] [na]gara[ka]sa danamukho); Fig. 8.11h-iii.
- d) inscription under the seated Buddha on the lotus pedestal at the north end of the west side (Fig. 8.11d): "Of the friend of the Śramaṇas" (Shamanamitrassa); Fig. 8.11h-iv.
- e) inscription under 2<sup>nd</sup> Buddha from the west end of the north wall (Fig. 8.11g): "Pious gift of the Bhikṣu Dhanu..." (Dha[ṇu]sha... [bhi]chhu... sa [dandmu]kho.); Fig. 8.11h-v.

<sup>100</sup> *Buddhavaṃsa*, p. 97. See Chapter 7, footnotes 141 and 142 for details concerning this text and these two verses.

<sup>101</sup> Marshall (1921), p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> Marshall comments: "The name Saghamitra may have been an honorific title conferred on Budhadeva by the community of monks." Marshall (1921), p. 9.

- f) inscription under the central Buddha of the north side: “Pious gift of the bhikṣu Rahula, of Vanaya” (Rahulasa vanaeasa bhichhusa daṇamukho); Fig. 8.11h-vi and Fig. 8.11i.<sup>103</sup>

These inscriptions reveal that the images were established by at least six individual donations and not by a single donor for all the images on the stupa. They may not all have been made at precisely the same time, thus accounting for the individuality in the images. However, the usage of the Kharoṣṭhī script would tend to date the images prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is generally agreed that the usage of Kharoṣṭhī script in India, including the northwest area, was replaced by Brāhmī script by ca. 400, though there is still some variation in opinions.<sup>104</sup>

An interesting question arises if we consider these inscriptions further. Who, then is the female donor on the west wall (and possibly another donor on the east wall, now ruined) and how might she (they) be related to the inscriptions? Considering these questions, we can see that on the east wall there is one inscription, the bhikṣu donor Budhadeva, who is clearly a male. Perhaps the ruined figure at the south end of the east wall was then a depiction of him. On the south wall there is no donor statue, but there are at least two bhikṣu donor inscriptions, so this wall had more than one donor and perhaps that is one reason there is no donor statue. On the west wall there is one female donor statue at the south end of the west wall. This wall has only one inscription, located under the image at the north end of the wall, i.e., under the last image on the wall and not under the female donor. However, this inscription does not mention the donor as a bhikṣu, but simply as “a friend of the śramaṇas.” This could well match with the lay female donor, who may have been the sole donor of the images on the west wall and therefore her image appears here. Perhaps the east wall with the bhikṣu Budhadeva is a similar case with the inscription written not next to the donor’s image, but rather at the beginning of the wall (in circumambulatory terms), if the ruined image is in fact a donor. On the north side there are two inscriptions of two different bhikṣus, and there is, like the south wall, no donor statue. It would appear that both the east and west walls may have been donated by a single person, perhaps one male (east wall) and one female (west wall). The south and north walls, both of which had (at least) two donors, have no individual donor statues.

As we perceive the way in which this stupa was apparently made with different donors on each wall, it becomes even more evident that each wall is probably a discrete entity. This again supports the theory that the five Buddhas are repeated on at least three walls (south, west and north) and four images (or possibly five) on the east wall. The stupa itself is aligned to the four directions and the Buddha configurations, as detailed above, are sufficiently different to indicate discrete representations in each of the four different directions. The point to be emphasized here is the apparent awareness of the directional component wedded to the lineage component, the latter, however, being possibly variable. Even the order of reading of the five Buddhas on each of the three walls appears to be different, if not for each wall then at least for several. So there is no single “set order”, but several variants.

<sup>103</sup> Marshall (1921), p. 9 and rubbings of the inscriptions in pl. XI a, b, d, e, c, f, and g.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Salomon, for example, seems to be suggesting a somewhat earlier date for the demise. In commenting on stone Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions he states that “These inscriptions date from the time of Aśoka, that is, the middle of the third century B.C., until the third or possibly early fourth century A.D., at which time the Kharoṣṭhī script seems to have fallen out of use in the Indian world and been replaced by local derivatives of Brāhmī script (p. 77) ...Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script gradually fell out of use in India in or not much later than the third century A.D.” R. Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra*, Seattle, 1999, pp. 77 and 137. For the usage of Kharoṣṭhī script in Central Asia, where, according to the work of Lin Mei-tsung, it appears to have phased out by around 380 or the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, see Rhie (1999), pp. 338-443.

With regard to the dating of these images on the Stupa A15, it has been noted that the stupa structure itself is considered to be early (ca. 200–mid 4<sup>th</sup>, allowing for the varying opinions). Marshall, Behrendt and Fitzsimmons all regard the stucco imagery to have been added later than the original structure, though only Marshall is somewhat specific regarding the date when the images were applied, suggesting by implication the 5<sup>th</sup> century, near the last days of the site. Though there may have been several different artists and perhaps some time differences in the making of the images, they all appear to be generally stylistically similar. Several factors suggest a relatively early dating, perhaps around the early to mid-4<sup>th</sup> century and prior to the sculptures on the main stupa.

1) There are no niches or pilasters, and this suggests that the sculptures were applied before the popular use of pilasters and niches. This could mean that they are earlier than Stupas K1 and N4 at Dharmarājikā (dated to ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup>–mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, taking into account the views of Marshall, Behrendt, and Fitzsimmons).

2) Style of dharmachakra mudrā

The style of the dharmachakra mudrā displayed in the two smaller Buddhas on lotus pedestals on the west side of A15 appears to be more developed than the full hand clasp (as seen in the bronze stupa in Fig. 8.11k), but not as developed as the style showing the left hand dropped lower and the right hand grasping only the tips of the fingers of the left hand. The lower the drop of the left hand, the more advanced the style.<sup>105</sup> In examples of the stucco Buddhas from the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu, the left hand has dropped very low and only the tips of the fingers are held by the right hand (*Taxila*, pls. 150, 152), as also seen in Fig. 8.8j. This would suggest a placement for A15 images before the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (see above for discussion of dating of the Mohrā Morādu sculptures).

3) Style of Buddha images

The stucco Buddha images are probably later than the style seen in the Kara-tepe Complex D image discussed above as dating ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century (perhaps close to the Haṣṭnagar Buddha of ca. 262 A.D.) in Fig. 8.8d and also later than the seated Buddha of Alcove B20 at Kalawan (*Taxila*), which probably dates to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century as noted above (Fig. 8.8f). For instance, the central Buddha of the west wall (Fig. 8.11f) shows the tendency to pair the graceful rib folds as seen in style of the Kalawan Buddha, but there is also a tendency to make the curved patterns that appear in even stronger form in the large sculptures of the main stupa at Jauliāñ (Fig. 8.8c) of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or ca. 400, as discussed above. The three Buddhas of the east wall (Fig. 8.11b) have slightly heavier proportions than the west wall Buddha in Fig. 8.11f, but again, along with a certain elegance of lines there is the clear move towards a patterning and formalization of the drapery. However, none of the A15 sculptures appear to be as advanced as the stucco images at Mohrā Morādu—those on the main stupa, which probably date to early fifth century, and those in the monastery court, which probably date later in the fifth century. Generally, from these elements, the images of Stupa A15 would appear to date around mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, a dating which would also be agreeable with the usage of Kharoṣṭhi script in the donor inscriptions.

It can further be noted that certain motifs appearing in the A15 Buddhas, such as the incised lines forming V-shaped, M-shaped or W-shaped patterns representing the folds over the center of the crossed legs in one of the three east wall Buddhas (Fig. 8.11b), appear in quite a few examples from

<sup>105</sup> This factor was discussed by Grilli von Mitterwallner; see Mitterwallner (1987), pp. 218-219.

Afghanistan, such as in the dhyānāsana Buddha in the pedestal of the Buddhas of the Three Times (with Dīpaṃkara) from Shotorak (Fig. 8.11k), generally dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and in many of the stucco dhyānāsana Buddhas on the stupas at Haḍḍa, as we shall encounter later below.

Another notable motif is the oval-shaped filling connection between two converging rib folds that produces a clearly curved V-shape connection. This fold technique appears on the right shoulder area of the third Buddha of the east wall in Fig. 8.11b. Similar motifs occur in some stone sculptures from the Peshawar region, such as seen in the dhyānāsana Buddha from Sahrī Bahlol C in Fig. 8.11m.

#### 4) Style of the female donor

The female donor figure is a lovely image with slight tribhaṅga, a sense of the simply rounded torso and limbs with some weight and volume, and rather simple drapery with a shawl that drapes below the right knee. In terms of the simplicity of form and the low draped shawl, there is some similarity with the sculptures such as the standing figures in the stone relief from Loṛiyān Tāngai in Fig. 8.11n, which is likely to date ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century. The A15 female donor does not show the more curvaceous shaping of the form as seen in the standing female donor from the sculptures on the main stupa at Mohṛā Morādu (Fig. 8.11o), which clearly possess an early Gupta style posture and slender, curvaceous form and probably dates ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 5) Style of lotus pedestal

It is difficult to see an exactly similar lotus pedestal to those on the west side small Buddhas. Those at Mohṛā Morādu all appear to be a little more developed, such as the one in the entrance niche (Fig. 8.8j) suggested as dating ca. mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, though there is still a hint of the round form as the foundation for the lower section with the down-turned petals.

Stupa A15, in its total form, appears to be an important object for understanding not only the chronology of stupas and images around the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but also in understanding the iconography of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa in what appears to be a more complex arrangement and also probably in a relatively early appearance. Though the scheme of its iconography of images presented here is not entirely certain, it is unlikely that the images are simply a random group. The hypothesis of identity as the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa presented here seems plausible, and as we shall see, is borne out by various other examples in the stupas of Gandhāra and Haḍḍa.

#### b. *Stupa A11*

Stupa A11 is a relatively large and quite well preserved square stupa located at the south side of the main stupa (the highest stupa in Figs. 8.5a, b, c), near the center and very close to the wall of the main stupa, like most of the subsidiary stupas (except A15). Stupa A12, adjacent on the west to Stupa A11, is built up close against the west side of A11 (Fig. 8.4), but it does not appear to cover all the west wall of Stupa A11. The quite high podium (but not as high as A15) has a row of seated images without pilasters on the east side and also on the west side, but there are no images on the south side (Fig. 8.5b) or north side. According to Marshall, the lowest level (podium) “is adorned with a series of seated images, four on the east and four on the west side. On the east, the figures are of Buddha in the teaching attitude alternating with Bodhisattvas, of which the one at the northern corner is shown by the flask that he holds in his left hand to be Maitreya (Fig. 8.12a). On the west side, are one Buddha and three Bodhisattvas.”<sup>106</sup> Figs. 8.12a, b, and c show the images of the east side and Fig. 8.12d shows the seated

<sup>106</sup> Marshall (1921), p. 7. Fitzsimmons also confirms that images appear only on the east and west sides. Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 80.

Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā at the northern end of the west side *in-situ* at the time of excavation. Fig. 8.12e is the same image restored.

Above the podium there are three surviving (and restored) levels each with four pilasters and four image niches on all four sides.<sup>107</sup> A row of alternating atlantes and protomes (busts of crouching lions) support the lowest level and also appear between the first and second levels above the podium (Fig. 8.5b). This superstructure is different from A15, but is a hallmark of the later stupas categorized as Design K type by Fitzsimmons and seen in abundance at Jauliñ.<sup>108</sup> Stupa A11 appears to be a combination of elements seen in Stupa A15 (such as the high podium with rows of large images without pilasters or image niches, and lacking the “basement” feature), together with the superstructure of three levels containing rows of alternating trefoil and trabeated niches separated by pilasters. This is a construction form distinguished by the later groups of stupas at Jauliñ, such as A16, D4 and D1, and others, which appear to post-date Stupa A11 in the elaboration of this kind of structural design and sculpture elaboration.

#### i. Iconography

Fig. 8.5b shows the south and east sides of Stupa A11. It confirms that there are no images on the south side at present and, without a platform, appears not to have had images originally. On the east side there are two Bodhisattvas alternating with two Buddhas (Figs. 8.12a, b, c) in the following scheme (reading from right to left, facing):

- 1) dhyānāsana Bodhisattva holding a small flask, probably identifiable as Maitreya (with circular head halo) (Fig. 8.12a);
- 2) seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā (now headless) (Fig. 8.12b)
- 3) seated Bodhisattva in dhyāna mudrā (now headless) (Fig. 8.12b, c)
- 4) seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā (now headless) (Fig. 8.12c)

All four images sit directly on a projecting platform, though this has been damaged around the last Buddha at the far left (facing, Fig. 8.12c). The presence of two Bodhisattvas, one of which is identifiable as Maitreya (with a flask), suggests that the other Bodhisattva is likely to be Siddhartha. Perhaps the two Buddhas are the Buddha forms of those two Bodhisattvas. The west wall with one dharmachakra Buddha (north end, Figs. 8.12d, e) and the three reported Bodhisattvas (no photos available), is also a difficult theme to interpret. They could all be different Bodhisattvas or all be forms of Maitreya (that is, three different Bodhisattva forms of Maitreya and one Buddha Maitreya). The stupa seems to be predicated on the set of four, which is even carried through on the superstructure levels. The set of four seems to be quite variable iconographically. Though it can indicate the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, perhaps the case in the superstructure, but with the presence of Maitreya and the other bodhisattvas would preclude this assessment for the images on the podium base. It appears that this stupa may be related to some new ideas of representation that are also emerging in the stone sculptures in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries in Gandhāra, but which are at present are difficult to interpret.

<sup>107</sup> For cut-away elevation, see Marshall (1951), pl. 101.

<sup>108</sup> A11 is a Design K stupa according to Fitzsimmon's categorization. Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 75ff, but with respect to the Jauliñ stupas, see pp. 79-81. He does not place A11 relative to A15 or what he considers the next group of D5, A2 and A20. A11 and also A19 have “tall podium bases against the walls of which lean plaster, seated figures without pilasters separating them. At A11 the sculpted figures are in a row on the west and east sides; at A19 on the west and north sides and also on the east side, north of A20.” *Ibid.*, p. 80.



## ii. Date

The style of the images appears more advanced than that of the images in A15 and yet relatively close to the sculptural style of the small images in Stupas D4 and D1 in the lower stupa court at Jauliāñ discussed below. The chubby body and somewhat soft and complex yet somewhat formalized fold formation of the drapery folds is distinctly different from the images on Stupa A15. It does, however have some close relation with some of the sculptures at Mohrā Morādu in the fancy elaboration of the hems and the more variegated drapery fold types. One type, as seen in the beautiful Maitreya Bodhisattva in Fig. 8.12a, displays a bold and rather thick portrayal of the parallel pleats, which have a distinctly softened rounded edge. The clustering of three such folds in the twist of the shawl hanging over the crossed legs can be seen as a more subdued but nevertheless clear pattern in the folded hems on one of the seated Buddha sculptures of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.12f). Such sculptural mannerisms also appear in the stele of the Three Times Buddhas from Shotorak in Fig. 8.12f. These elements suggest a dating around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century for Stupa A11.<sup>109</sup>

## c. Stupas A2, A20 and D5

A different form of stupa and stupa decoration occurs in Stupas A2, A20 and D5, all of which Fitzsimmons places chronologically (based on the masonry type) shortly after Stupa A15, which both he and Marshall consider to be the earliest of the subsidiary stupas around the main stupa at Jauliāñ. Stupas A2, A20 and D5 all have a square podium that is demarcated on each side by three pilasters. All have more complex moldings compared with A15, and they also have the addition of a low basement,<sup>110</sup> which A15 and A11 do not have.

Stupas A2 and A20 may have been a pair, one on each side of the access staircase of the main stupa (Figs. 8.4, 8.5e, 8.13a, b).<sup>111</sup> According to Fitzsimmons, the “architrave and foot molding of both are the same.” He notes that small patches of masonry are exposed at A20 and that it appears consistent with Type 8 [semi-ashlar] masonry and with “the little that is known of the original masonry at Dharmarajika K1” (which he dates to “possibly not before the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century,” but which Marshall and Behrendt date earlier).<sup>112</sup>

The surviving lower level of Stupa A2 on each side has three short “stunted” corinthian pilasters that form two bays, each with a large stucco dhyānāsana Buddha (Fig. 8.13a).<sup>113</sup> There is a slightly smaller, but still quite large, stucco dhyānāsana Buddha on each face of the three pilasters (presumably on each side; the east and north sides show in Fig. 8.13a). Thus each side apparently had two large dhyānāsana Buddhas alternating with three moderately sized dhyānāsana Buddhas making a total of five on each side with a 2 + 3 arrangement. This could possibly represent a five-Buddha configuration repeated

<sup>109</sup> Stupa A11 is one of the few stupas that was discovered with a relic chamber and its contents. The chamber was of large dimensions (10½” square and 3’ 8½” high) and contained a tall, seven-chattra stucco stupa studded with gem stones (garnet, carnelian, lapis-lazuli, aquamarine, ruby, agate, amethyst and crystal, cut into various shapes). This reliquary stupa was discussed in Vol. I and was related to the form of a bronze and some wooden stupas discovered at Lou-lan, dating prior to ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. Rhie (1999), p. 411 and note 169, where it is suggested that this reliquary stupa “could well be ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century period”; also see *Ibid.*, fig. 5.71. Marshall (1921), pp. 372-373 discusses the stupa, but does not date it.

<sup>110</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 33.

<sup>111</sup> The main stupa at Mohrā Morādu has one square subsidiary stupa (with three pilasters on each side) on the south side of the staircase. Originally there was a similar stupa on the north side of the staircase.

<sup>112</sup> See Dharmarajika Stupa K1 above. Fitzsimmons further notes regarding Stupa A2: “The basement of A4 overlaps the basement of A2 and the basement of A1 is added against the north side of A2, showing that both A4 and A1 are later than A2.” Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 33-34.

<sup>113</sup> Marshall (1951), I, p. 372.

four times. The total number of 20 would not appear to be significant, so it is unlikely to be read as a continuous total unit on each level (though perhaps the entirety of the niches on the whole stupa might have signified a particular number). If we take only the total number of 8 large Buddhas in the lower level, then the scheme could represent the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya and/or the eight-direction Buddhas, but such a reading would diminish the importance of the pilaster Buddhas, which would appear to be more than mere decoration, and to be important on account of their relatively large size. It is, however, always possible that the pilaster Buddhas were added at a later time than the Buddhas in the bay-niches, but that would not change the fact that the five-Buddha scheme is ultimately the final scheme. Jauliñ Stupa D5 discussed below offers inscriptional evidence that suggests that each side of the stupa is a discrete entity and that the configuration of Buddhas are the same on each side (see D5 below). It is also interesting to note that Group 20 in Cave 169 has five distinctive Buddhas of varying sizes, but which appear to be a single set (Fig. 5.57). These factors would suggest that a discrete, five Buddha configuration on each side is at this point the preferred reading for the A2 stupa.

From Figs. 8.4 and 8.13b, it is clear that Stupa A20 (on the right side of the staircase of the main stupa) does not have any stucco Buddhas on the pilasters, but has only one large dhyānāsana Buddha in each of the two bay-niches (presumably on each of the four sides), unless all the pilaster Buddhas are missing, and this does not appear to be the case. If read as a totality this could refer to the 8-direction Buddhas, or to the set of seven Buddhas plus Maitreya. If they are read discretely as two Buddhas on each of the four sides (directions), it is difficult to determine, but perhaps most likely would be Śākyamuni and Maitreya Buddhas.

Stupa D5 is located in the lower stupa court (Figs. 8.4, 8.5e with man standing beside it at far left) together with Stupas D1-D4 (discussed below) and not with the group of stupas numbering A1 to A21 immediately surrounding the main stupa in the upper stupa court. Fig. 8.14a shows a close-up of the northeast corner of D5 (at the far left). According to Fitzsimmons, “the masonry of one panel of D5 is exposed on the north side at the northwest corner. This resembles the Type 7 masonry of A15 more than later masonry.” Further, he argues that “the builders would not have built D1-D4 leaving an empty spot for another stupa in the corner of the court.”<sup>114</sup> According to Fitzsimmons, differences that he observed in the masonry and the large difference in perimeter between the second story and the first story of Stupa D5 appear to support a view that the first and second levels are not contemporary. From Fitzsimmons’ analysis the lower level with the images is earlier than the upper levels, which seem to have been added or renovated later with Type 8 or Type 9 masonry, whereas the lower portion is closer to his Type 7 masonry.<sup>115</sup>

Stupa D5 is particularly important with regard to identifying the main Buddha images of the lower level from some surviving inscriptions. “On stupa D5 some inscriptions are invested with additional interest, as they contain the designation of the images beneath which they are inscribed.”<sup>116</sup> Marshall describes Stupa D5 as follows: “Each of the four faces of the stupa is divided into three bays by Indo-Corinthian pilasters of somewhat slenderer proportions and with more ornate capitals than is usual in these stupas. In each bay is seated a Buddha, seemingly in the dhyāna-mudrā, and smaller figures in

<sup>114</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 33.

<sup>115</sup> He notes that the podium of D5 has a second square story and that “the small areas of visible masonry in the bottom [of the second ?] story appear closest to Type 8 [Marshall’s semi-ashlar] or later. The short ashlar course on the east side at the northeast corner of the second story may be part of a scheme of Type 9 (semi-ashlar) masonry. This later phase of D5 appears related to the design of K1, N4, and the first phase of J1 with their relatively tall, square first story divided into an odd number of panels and square second story.” Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 35.

<sup>116</sup> Marshall, (1951), p. 374.

the same attitude adorn the shafts of the pilasters. The plinth appears to have undergone renovation and some of the images may be later than the background to which they are applied.” This stupa has “an unusually large relic chamber divided into two sections, the upper square in plan with a depth of one foot nine inches and the lower circular with a depth of four feet six inches.”<sup>117</sup> This is one of only two relic chambers found among the stupas of Jauliāñ (the other is A11). Its large size speaks to the importance of D5, which may have been the first of the subsidiary stupas built in the lower stupa court. Stupa D5 also, however, gains particular importance for its inscriptions on the images.

Stupa D5 has five fragmentary, surviving inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī script. Each is located on the pedestal seat just below the respective seated Buddha (Fig. 8.14b).<sup>118</sup> These are of great consequence as inscriptions are very rare, and these record the name of the Buddha and the act of a gift.<sup>119</sup> It is also worthy of note that the usage of Kharoṣṭhī script, which apparently phased out by ca. 400 (see note 104 above), would tend to support a date prior to ca. 400 for this stupa and the decoration of the lower level. They are as follows:

- 1) central Buddha on the east face: [“The gift...”]
- 2) central Buddha on the south face: “(Ka) śavo Tathagato sa.hasaśa” [“the Tathāgatha Kāśyapa”]<sup>120</sup> (Fig. 8.14b-i)
- 3) western Buddha on the south face: “(da)ṇamu (kho)” [“The gift...”]
- 4) central Buddha on the west face: “Kaśavo Tathagato” [“Kāśyapa Tathāgatha”] (Fig. 8.14b-ii)
- 5) northern Buddha on the west face: “Śakamu(ni) Tathagato Jinaeśa daṇa (mukho)” [“Śākyamun(ni) Tathāgata, Lord of Jinas—a gift”] (Fig. 8.14b-iii)

Though Marshall did not remark on this fact, these inscriptions provide vital data of the names and placement of the Buddhas. From these we can understand that these sets of three large Buddhas on each side are in all probability the three Buddhas, that is, the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present and Future). The presence of both Śākyamuni and Kāśyapa, Buddhas of the present and past respectively, as identified by the inscriptions would strongly indicate this iconographic set. The fact that Kāśyapa, Buddha of the Past is located in the central niche according to the inscriptions of both the south and west sides, suggests that the order places the Buddha of the Past in the center. The order of the two inscriptions on the west face suggest that Śākyamuni, Buddha of the Present, is at the proper right side of the central Buddha Kāśyapa, Buddha of the Past. It is of interest to note that all the Buddhas are portrayed in the dhyāna mudrā. In this case, the smaller pilaster Buddhas could be identified in several different ways. There would be four on each side, which, if added to the three larger main Buddhas would produce a total of the seven Buddhas on each side. However, this would preclude counting Maitreya, which would obviate the interpretation of the Three Times Buddhas for the main three on each side. If the small pilaster Buddhas were separate from the three main images, then they could represent Buddhas of the four directions or the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. It is also possible that they were added later, when the stupa was renovated, so may not have been particularly related to the large Buddhas in the bays.

<sup>117</sup> Marshall (1951), p. 375. Also see elevation with the relic chamber in *Ibid.*, pl. 101.

<sup>118</sup> Marshall (1951), pl. 109e, f, g; and for the rubbings see Marshall (1921), pl. XI h, i, j, k and l.

<sup>119</sup> A new translation of the inscriptions appears in Marshall (1951), p. 375, correcting some mistranslation in the Marshall (1921).

<sup>120</sup> According to Marshall, the two letters śavo are only on the lower layer of plaster—the top layer was broken away. Marshall (1951), p. 373 and Marshall (1921), p. 10.

Whether or not this ordering of three Buddhas is standard in other places, including in China, and in other time periods, is difficult to say at present, but at least we have one evidence from Jauliāñ, probably dating ca. mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century that shows the thinking of that area at that time, which is of some consequence, especially in the light of a severe dearth of inscribed images that can help us to decipher the iconography of Buddhist imagery.

Finally, one small but possibly consequential point from the detailed photos of the Buddhas with the three inscribed names in Fig. 8.14b. Even though the details are very limited, it appears that only the Buddha Śākyamuni is sitting on a grass mat (Fig. 8.14b-iii). As the only Buddha to undergo austerities, this could be a defining element for Śākyamuni. Certainly it is a feature in depictions of Śākyamuni in early reliefs, such as those from the Sikri Stupa.<sup>121</sup> This is an issue below in the discussion of four stone Buddhas from Sahri Bahlōl (see below, section III.C.2). It is also of note that the colossal Buddhas on the main stupa at Jauliāñ all seem to have had the grass mat, but this is hard to confirm.

#### d. Stupas A16, D4 and D1

Fitzsimmons has noted that there are many Design K stupas at Jauliāñ.<sup>122</sup> Design K stupas are defined in general by Fitzsimmons as follows: “The podium of the stupa is square and divided into several narrow stories, the perimeters of which tend as a whole to diminish in size with increasing distance from ground level. There is no staircase or projection. Decoration includes stunted pilasters, atlantes and protome brackets. The stupas are sometimes built on a basement, the range of heights being large, and some have a comparatively high base at the bottom story. Examples have been associated with Type 10 and Type 11 masonry (mid and late semi-ashlar). He cites Jauliāñ Stupas A1, A3-12, A16-19 and D1-D4 as examples.<sup>123</sup>

#### i. Stupa A16

Stupa A16 (Figs. 8.4, 8.15), originally in the group of stupas to the west side of the main stupa, was moved after excavation to the Taxila Museum and restored.<sup>124</sup> It is one of the stupas at Jauliāñ for which there is evidence of a drum above the third story.<sup>125</sup> In basic structure it is very similar to Stupas D2 and D3 of the lower court discussed below, all of which probably date to a slightly later period (perhaps ca. early or first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century) than A15 and A11 (including the stucco renovations) and the other earlier stupas discussed above. There is considerably more elaboration in Stupa A16, as well as Stupas D2 and D3, all of which are based on configurations of three seated Buddhas, each in a separate niche (alternating trefoil and trabeated) set between short pilasters, on each side of the three levels. Each niche is attended by worshippers.

The iconography of these levels could be the Buddhas of the Three Times—an iconography suggested by the layout of Stupa D5 discussed above—repeated on all four sides and all three levels. This indicates rather complex meanings, possibly incorporating more ideas associated with Mahāyāna, such as the Buddhas of the Three Times in the four directions. The possible meaning of the various levels is not clear, but what is especially significant with A16 is that there were clearly not additional

<sup>121</sup> H. Ingholt and I. Lyons, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, New York, 1957, figs. 66, 68, 70, 96 9. The grass mat is not seen in the pedestal representing Buddha in the Trayastriṃśa Heaven from this same series on the Sikri Stupa. *Ibid.*, fig. 104.

<sup>122</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 77.

<sup>123</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 19.

<sup>124</sup> Marshall, (1951), pl. 156 c.

<sup>125</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), p. 80.

levels before the dome. This serves as an example which can probably be applied to Stupas D1 and D4, whose dome portion did not survive.

## ii. Stupas D4 and D1

In the group of stupas on the southern side of the lower stupa court, including D2, D3 and D5 already noted above, there are also the two quite large stupas D4 and D1 (Figs. 8.4, 8.16a-f, 8.17a-e). D4 and D1 are very similar to each other (though not precisely the same in all details) and both present examples of considerable interest for our current study. Both are premised on the configuration of five images on each level on each of the four sides of the square stupa. D4 has the remains of three levels (above which was the dome, now lost), but D1, which presumably had the same structure, only has two surviving levels. Both are lavishly decorated with a complex array of niches and figures in stucco. The richness and variety of the details and the compact arrangements of figures suggest an exuberance probably indicative of the later evolution of the votive subsidiary stupa styles in the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Gandhāra. Though similar to Stupa A16 (which is later than the earlier stupas A15, A11, A2, and A20), Stupas D4 and D1 are probably even a little later in date than A16 as they exhibit greater elaboration.

### a) Stupa D4

Stupa D4 has a “basement” (Fitzsimmons’s term for the lowest course of stones that project out from below the base molding of the podium) on which is a row of lion busts (protomes) alternating with atlantes that support the podium.<sup>126</sup> The first level (termed Level A here) on each of the four sides has a row of five niches, each containing a seated Buddha in alternating trefoil arched niches and trabeated niches (Figs. 8.16a, b). The scheme of Level A (lowest level or podium) is as follows:<sup>127</sup>

#### *Level A*

East face (reading from right to left, facing; see Fig. 8.16a, right side; and details in Figs. 8.16c, d):

- 1) Buddha in trabeated niche in dharmachakra mudrā and attended by two kneeling monks
- 2) Buddha in trefoil niche in dhyāna mudrā and attended by two dhyānāsana Buddhas
- 3) Buddha in trabeated niche in dharmachakra mudrā and attended by two kneeling monks (detail in Fig. 8.16d)
- 4) Buddha in trefoil arch niche in dhyāna mudrā attended by two dhyānāsana Buddhas
- 5) Buddha in trabeated niche in dharmachakra mudrā and attended by two kneeling monks.

In sum, trefoil and trabeated niches alternate; Buddhas in trabeated niches are in dharmachakra mudrā and are attended by two kneeling monks; Buddhas in trefoil niches are in dhyāna mudrā and attended by two seated Buddhas. The pilasters are short with corinthian type capital and with simple bases.

South face (reading right to left, facing; see Fig. 8.16a, left side):

- 1) Buddha in trefoil arched niche in dhyāna mudrā and attended by two (dhyānāsana ?) Buddhas
- 2) Buddha in trabeated niche in dhyāna mudrā and attended by two kneeling monks

<sup>126</sup> Fitzsimmons notes that stupas with lion busts (animal protomes), etc. do not appear on stupa structures earlier than Type 10 masonry (double semi-ashlar). Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 79-80.

<sup>127</sup> These identifications come from photographs and from the on-site notes of Kurt Behrendt, who has kindly shared them with me. His notations will be marked with an asterisk.

- 3) (Buddha\*)<sup>128</sup>
- 4) (Buddha\*)
- 5) (Buddha\*)

The niches continue in the same alternating pattern as seen on the east face.

West face (not available in photos, but presumably all Buddhas as the main image in each niche; niches probably alternate trabeated, trefoil, etc.). According to K. Behrendt's on-site observations, the remains are (from right to left, facing):

- 1) Buddha\*
- 2) Buddha\*
- 3) ?\*
- 4) Buddha\*
- 5) ?\*

North face (reading right to left, facing; see Fig. 8.16e, far left stupa):

- 1) Buddha in trefoil niche in dhyāna mudrā and attended by two dhyānāsana Buddhas
- 2) Buddha in trabeated niche, dharmachakra mudrā, attended by two kneeling monks
- 3) Buddha in trefoil niche in dhyāna mudrā and attended by a seated Yakṣa and Yakṣi (Fig. 8.16f)
- 4) Buddha in trabeated niche in dharmachakra mudrā and attended by two kneeling monks
- 5) Buddha in trefoil niche in dhyāna mudrā and attended by two dhyānāsana Buddhas

In sum: trefoil and trabeated niches alternate and appear to be in continuous alternation all around the stupa; Buddhas in the trefoil niches are in dhyāna mudrā; Buddhas in trabeated niches are in dharmachakra mudrā; one difference on this north face is the presence of a "Yakṣa and Yakṣi" attending the Buddha in the central niche, perhaps as protectors; two monks attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> niches; two dhyānāsana Buddhas attend the two end Buddhas.

Above the molding is a row of brackets that support a cornice (eave) separating the podium from the two upper levels (Levels B and C) which form the square base for the round dome. Alternating stucco sculptures of elephants and atlantes support the base of the Level B-C unit. Both levels have five niches on each side. Though not all of the images survive from Levels B and C, there are enough to offer some important indications.

*Level B* is configured as follows (reading right to left, facing):

- 1) East face: seated Bodhisattva (dhyāna mudrā, trefoil niche); seated Buddha (dharmachakra mudrā?, trabeated niche); seated Buddha (dhyāna? mudrā, trefoil niche); seated Buddha (dharmachakra mudrā, trabeated niche); seated Bodhisattva\* (dhyāna? mudrā, trefoil niche).  
Trefoil and trabeated niches alternate. The attendants are mostly not identifiable from the photographs. All the niches appear to be supported by lion or elephant busts.
- 2) South face: seated Buddha (dharmachakra mudrā, trabeated niche); seated Bodhisattva (dhyāna mudrā, trefoil niche); seated Buddha (dhyāna mudrā ?, trabeated niche) ; (Bodhisattva\*) ; ?\*. All the niches appear to be supported by lions or elephants.

<sup>128</sup> The asterisk here and subsequently indicates that the information comes from K. Behrendt's field notes, which he kindly shared with me.



- 3) West face: The west face is difficult because of a lack of photo or description documentation. According to K. Behrendt's on-site notes the remains are: ?\*; ?\*; Buddha\*, ?\*; Bodhisattva\*. This face configuration is probably similar to that of the East face: Bodhisattva, Buddha, Buddha, Buddha, Bodhisattva.
- 4) North face: seated Buddha\* (dharmachakra mudrā?, trabeated niche); ?; seated Buddha (dharmachakra mudrā, trabeated niche); seated Bodhisattva (dhyāna mudrā, trefoil niche); seated Buddha (dharmachakra mudrā, trabeated niche).

Both the east and the north face alternate trefoil and trabeated niches and attendants (but the attendants are mostly not identifiable). The pilasters are corinthian with simple base moldings. The south face certainly has the addition of lion or elephants as holding up the trefoil arch (lion) or trabeated niche (elephant), and it appears that all the niches on this level have similar adornments of lion and elephant busts. There do not appear to have been small Buddhas on the pilasters, which is different from Stupa D1 in this regard.

Top level (Level C), that is, the third level of Stupa D4, has a row of five niches (alternating trabeated and trefoil) on each side (reading right to left, facing) as follows (\*refers to identifications from K. Behrendt's on-site notes):

#### *Level C*

- 1) East face: ?\*, ?\*, ?\*, Buddha\* (dhyāna mudrā), Buddha\* (dharmachakra mudrā?)
- 2) South face: Bodhisattva\* (dhyāna mudrā); Buddha\* (dharmachakra mudrā), Buddha\*, Buddha\*, ?\*
- 3) West face: ?\*, ?\*, ?\*, ?\*, ?\*
- 4) North face: ?\*, ?\*, ?\*, ?\*, ?\*

There are attendants, but they are not identifiable from current documentation available to me. The pilasters are high relief columns (Persepolitan type) on a simple square base.

In sum, Level A appears to have five Buddhas on all four sides. Level B appears to have two Bodhisattvas on each side as follows: on the east and (probably) west sides the Bodhisattvas appear in the niche at the two ends; on the north and south sides the two Bodhisattvas appear flanking the central Buddha. This would make a pattern of alternating Buddhas and Bodhisattvas continuously around all sides on Level B. Level C is mostly ruined, so it is very problematic. However, the south face appears to have one Bodhisattva at the east end (Fig. 8.16a), so perhaps it has another at the other end (though this is not confirmable). If so, then the scheme may alternate with that of Level B below. The major point of interest is the appearance of two Bodhisattvas on each face of Level B (and possibly on Level C originally). The identity of these two Bodhisattvas is likely to be Maitreya and Siddhartha (see discussion of iconography in conclusion to D4 and D1 below). If, however, the scheme is consistently alternating Buddha and Bodhisattva around the whole stupa as a unit, then the individual identification becomes very problematic. Even if individual identification is involved for each side as a discrete unit, then, as seen in other cases, such as A15, there is no single order of reading for every side. It appears that virtually any order is possible, but, in the case of each wall being a discrete unit there is a certain alternating symmetry involved.

#### b) Stupa D1

Stupa D1 is similar to D4 (Fig. 8.17a). However, it has only two surviving levels, the podium (Level A) and the second level (Level B). Both levels are fairly well preserved on the west side (Fig. 8.17a). Each level has five niches as I can determine from the photos and documentation, and a similar dense

arrangement of alternating trefoil and trabeated niches like D4: a seated image inside each niche and a pair of attendants outside each niche. Figs. 8.17b and c show details of the lowest level (Level A) on the north end of the west side and provide details of the style of the dharmachakra mudrā and the style of lotus pedestals on the attendant smaller Buddhas.

What is particularly interesting is the appearance on the west side in Level B of at least two Bodhisattva niches in the nos.1 and 3 positions. Possibly, if symmetry was considered, there was originally a third Bodhisattva in the last niche in the row (no. 5), which, however, is now vacant and missing its image, so there is no confirmation of this (Fig. 8.17a). There may have been originally a scheme of alternating three Bodhisattvas with two Buddhas. Thus, reading from right to left (facing): a seated Bodhisattva in dhyāna mudrā with trefoil niche supported by recumbent lions and two figures (Bodhisattvas?) in the corners; a seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā under a trabeated niche supported by elephants and with two Bodhisattva figures in the corners (Fig. 8.17d); a seated Bodhisattva in dhyāna mudrā and holding a small flask (Figs. 8.17d and 8.17e), most likely Maitreya Bodhisattva, in a trefoil niche supported by recumbent lions and with two cross-ankled Bodhisattva figures in the corners; a seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā in a trabeated niche supported by elephants? and attended by two figures in the corners; and the last niche in the row (a trefoil niche that is restored) is vacant. Further, there is also a seated dhyānāsana Buddha on each of the six pilasters. Most of the north and east sides were greatly ruined (and only some niches restored, without images), so is difficult to comment on the total scheme except to note that is likely based on a set of five images, including probably two or possibly three Bodhisattvas.

Of particular interest is Fig. 8.17e clearly showing Maitreya Bodhisattva with the remains of a small flask as the identifying element. This would indicate that individual identity is involved in the image scheme of D1 and therefore D4 as well, despite the appearance of alternation, which could suggest mere generic images. In this case Maitreya is attended by two cross-ankled Bodhisattvas, the one on Maitreya's left clearly in the dharmachakra mudrā and the opposite Bodhisattva, more ruined, probably had the same mudrā. This is an important example with regard to iconography and will be referred to in our later discussions.

### iii. Style and Date of Stupas D4 and D1

#### a) Niches

The style of trefoil and trabeated niches bears much in common with the stucco styles at Ali Masjid (Khyber Pass) and many at Haḍḍa, which will be discussed further below. It appears to be a common stucco style during a certain period, probably later than Stupas K1 and N4 at Dharmarājikā. There is some evolution of the niche style among the subsidiary stupas at Jauliān from niches (A15) to the bay-niche formed by pilasters (A2 and D5) to the style of the A16, D4 and D1 trabeated and trefoil alternating niches. This evolution appears primarily, it would seem, during the 4<sup>th</sup> to first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. As Marshall has noted, Jauliān seems to have been burned sometime in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and there was no further building at the site.

#### b) Pilasters

The style of pilasters is similarly very common with the styles seen in other areas of Gandhāra and Haḍḍa. It is of particular interest to note, however, that the style of corinthian pilaster as seen in D4 and D1 is not only commonly seen at Ali Masjid and Haḍḍa, it is also seen in stone images, such as Fig. 8.11m, from Sahrī Bahlōl site C in the Peshawar area, of the classic seated Buddha type. That is, the

figure and drapery of the Sahri Bahlöl C sculpture in Fig. 8.11m is more or less contemporaneous with the trend of pilaster using abbreviated leaves and the simple horizontal plank forms above, similar to those in the stucco pilasters of D4 and D1. This would appear to indicate that the Gandhāran style of stone Buddha image as seen in Fig. 8.11m can be dated to about the same general time as Stupa D4 and D1, or that this form existed for an extended period of time and was perpetuated in the stucco medium. Even the kneeling worshippers (monks?) in the pedestal of the Sahri Bahlöl C Buddha are very similar in posture with the attendant kneeling monks in stupa D4.

#### c) Lotus Pedestals

From the detail in Fig. 8.17c, we can see that the lotus pedestals in Stupa D1 appear as compact, rounded shapes with a clear but low relief of petals for the semicircular lower portion. There is a narrow band of striated lines (a feature seen in lotus pedestals as early as the Sikri stupa), possibly representing the stamens, and, in the case of Stupa D1, the pod portion is quite low and round with about the same circumference as the lotus base. This is different from the lotus pedestal form seen in Stupa A15 (Fig. 8.11e). There are some similarities with the lotus pedestals of attendant images seen in some ensembles of the individual shrines, such as the entrance shrine (“Gandhakuṭi” niche in Behrendt’s terminology) at the entranceway at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.8j), compared with those lotus pedestals in Fig. 8.17c.

#### d) Individual Images

There are some slight differences in the image style between D4 and D1. The bodies of the D4 images are fuller, more massive and generally broader (compare, for example, Figs. 8.16f and 8.17c). Also, the drapery forms, though again very similar, show more sense of refinement in the folds than the forms of D1, which are somewhat coarser. There is little difference, but probably D4 is slightly earlier than D1. One point of interest: the end of the saṅghāṭi overlapping the legs in the center of the dhyānāsana Buddha of D4 in Fig. 8.16f has a flared shape with crinkly, wavy-edged hems that are similar to the overlap seen in the Buddhas of Group 23 at Cave 169 (Fig. 5.30d). This particular way of making this motif element is not readily encountered, but the occurrence in both of these images, one at Jauliāñ and one in Cave 169 dating ca. 410-415, possibly reveals some relative closeness in time. The lumpy form of jewelry seen in the Maitreya in Fig. 8.17e can also be noticed in many examples of Gandhāran Bodhisattva images, and this D1 figure can possibly be helpful in understanding one point of dating for this style.

#### iv. Conclusions and Iconography of Stupas D4 and D1

Both of these quite large and elaborate stupas follow a similar architectural form: a “basement” platform, a square podium (Level A) held up by lion busts (protomes) and atlantes and supporting a row of niches with images. Levels B and C above are the base for the stupa *per se* and give support for the dome with its chattrāvalī (umbrellas), now lost. Level B is supported by alternating atlantes and elephant busts.

Stupas D4 and D1 are elaborately adorned with images and are generally thought to date to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Marshall) or, according the Behrendt, to his phase III (ca. 3-5<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>129</sup> What is of prime importance to us is the fact that all three levels with image niches in Stupas D4 and D1 have five niches on all four sides. These two prime examples provide further evidence for the usage in Taxila of the iconographic set of five images. Furthermore, not all levels have the same iconographic scheme,

<sup>129</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 163-164, 184-220.

and there is variation (and very possibly alternation) between the Buddha and Bodhisattva images in Level B and possibly also in Level C. At least one Bodhisattva in Stupa D1 is Maitreya, which would strongly indicate that all the images have a specific identity. It should be stressed, however, that even though we cannot be certain of the specific identities of all the images—even in one row much less all the rows—the fact that five images are the standard and that there is variation between the rows, is in itself of major importance for interpreting the arrangement of sets of images that we see in China, and specifically with regard to the groups of five images in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169.

The square stupas D2 and D3 are smaller than D4 and D1, but are of similar architectural configuration, except that there are only three image niches on each of the four sides and on each of the levels, so with regard to sets of multiple images, they are a different iconography. It is likely that the standard of three niches refers to the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past Present and Future) repeated in the four directions and on the three levels, which could suggest in the three chilochosms and/or in the Past, Present and Future worlds.<sup>130</sup> More discussion of this important iconographic set will be done in Chapter 9 with regard to the great niches at Mai-chi shan.

A final point can be made at this juncture. The scheme of images in Stupas D4 and D1 is highly regularized in the way of being both symmetrical and having at the same time some variation within the symmetrical pattern. In this sense they exhibit a well developed scheme used in a complex and refined way indicative of a rather developed form. Similarly, the image style is well established, but not degenerated to the point of mere formality. The image style has multiple variations and continued interest in modeling and in differences in garment folds, which are afforded considerable detail. In general, there is a rather complex variation of different things going on simultaneously: variations in niches, attendants, pedestals and mudrās. These present possibilities for ascertaining an identification of individual images, though it is not easy. As noted above, the fact that Maitreya Bodhisattva is identifiable (at least on D1 west wall, Fig. 8.17e) leads one to think that the others are also identifiable—there is no reason to have one identifiable and not the others. It is a question of unlocking the identifying factors. Other Bodhisattvas without a flask (these are also in dhyānāsana) are likely to be Siddhārtha, who is also known in examples together with Maitreya in stone reliefs from Gandhāra. The case of the Stupa of Pai from Chiu-ch'üan in western Kansu province dated 434, which has both Maitreya and Siddhartha together in one row of eight images (lower row two right images in the photo in Fig. 8.17f) in an iconography which is clearly the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya, is confirming evidence of this combination of Siddhārtha and Maitreya as Bodhisattvas in such sets of multiple images by 434 A.D. in China<sup>131</sup> and, by implication, in Gandhāra as well. So it is likely that on those sides that have three Buddhas and two Bodhisattvas, the three Buddhas are the three predecessors of Śākyamuni. Maybe the identity can be worked out, but it is clear that it can be variable and not only one specific, invariable order. Even Maitreya and Siddhārtha may not be at the end of a row signifying a linear chronological

<sup>130</sup> From the *Buddhavarāṇsa* it also appears that the three Buddhas could be the three predecessors of Śākyamuni (see discussion with Sahrī Bahlōl, main stone stupa). It is possible that there is a choice and a preference involved and the example using the three predecessors of Śākyamuni are earlier (and Hināyāna?) and the examples interpretable as the Buddhas of the Three Times are later (and possibly Mahāyāna).

<sup>131</sup> Stupa Pai of the Liang chou group of stone stupas has two rows of eight images, one with one Bodhisattva (cross-ankled, which is Maitreya) and the other with a contemplative and a cross-ankled image. In the case of the latter, Siddhārtha takes the place of Śākyamuni Buddha, so both Śākyamuni and Maitreya are shown in Bodhisattva form. This is certain from the arrangement of the images with the trigrams and trigram images that identify the eight directions of space (four cardinal and four intermediate directions). This can be taken as an example that could substantiate that such an identity is being used in Stupa D4 and D1 at Jauliān.

formulation, as they are in the case of the Stupa of Pai. So it is obviously not a chronological arrangement on each side with regard to Level B (and possibly Level C) configurations on both Stupa D4 and D1. Though each side of the stupas may have the same personages, they are not necessarily in the same order (however, north and south may be one order, and east and west another). This also agrees with what appears in Stupa A15, which presented several different schemes of five (together with one side with four), though the scheme in Stupa D4 Level B is different from those schemes used in A15.

The scheme in Level B of Stupas D4 and D1 is apparently involving a spatial order (i.e., circular or directional) as the main order. There seems to be no other way to read the D4 and D1 schemes, that is, as non-linear, non-chronological. Such a spatial/directional order is even apparent in the Liang-chou stone stupas involving eight images in chronological order because even these are linked by the trigrams to a spatial direction. In regard to Stupas D4 and D1 with five images, it could be the four directions plus the center. In general, at least as far as I have been able to see, the early Mahāyāna sutras that were translated into Chinese do not mention the “five directions”, though they do mention the ten directions frequently, so perhaps there is some other idea in operation. It could be the early formulation of a mandalic circular or spatial structure, perhaps combining two sides to make ten or each wall a discrete five with spatial identification that is translated in a row or straight line. In the case of Stupas D4 and D1 it could involve the “earthly (mānuṣi) Buddha” lineage of the Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, but it may also be a precursor (or reflect) ideas known in esoteric Mahāyāna, which was presumably developing at this time.

With regard to the relation with Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, there is no exactly similar example using two Bodhisattvas, but certainly the five Buddhas as seen in Level A of Stupas D4 and D1 are similar to those of Group 16 in Cave 169 (Fig. 4.25). However, the circular (spatial) order could be applicable to the Group 12 painting (Fig. 7.41), but that is only with one Bodhisattva (Maitreya).

### 3. *Further Comments on Jauliāñ and Mohṛā Morādu*

Both of these monasteries are extremely important for the study not only of Gandhāra, but also for the early Buddhist art of China. Only a few specific features were focused on here, but there is much more to uncover at these sites. One can, for example take cognizance of the individual shrines that surround the upper and lower stupa courts at Jauliāñ. The upper court around the main stupa, besides being of immense interest for the many subsidiary stupas, has a total of 28 shrines around the perimeter of the court (B1-B28), as seen in Fig. 8.4. They, in fact, happen to be numbered in Marshall’s plan in accord with the direction of circumambulation of the stupa court. The number 28 is, as we have seen with the main stupa at Mohṛā Morādu, significant with respect to possibly reflecting the lineage of the Buddhas as known in the *Buddhavaṃsa* (25 including Śākyamuni, plus the three predecessors of Dīpaṃkara making 28). There does not appear to be any way at present to determine if this was indeed the scheme that was followed, but it should be considered as one possibility.

Further, the shrines of the lower court seem to cluster in groups of five (refer to plan in Fig. 8.4): C18-C14; C13-C9; C8-C4; C3-C1 together with C35-C34. C35 appears to be independent, but C32-C30 together with C24-C21 could form a group of the seven Buddhas leading to the stupa court with Stupa D6. C-19 and C20 appear to be independent. It is clear that C14, C15 and C16 formed a triad of colossal image shrines at the head of the lower stupa court. C15 is the Descent from the Traystrimśas Heaven, as evidenced by the triple staircase. This is an indication that at least some of the shrines may have been the subjects of Śākyamuni’s life, but perhaps some of the groups of five shrines could also have been the first five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa.

Shrine E2 is an important shrine, placed in the passageway between the stupa courts and the monastery (Fig. 8.4). It would appear to have been a relatively late addition and it is fortunately rather well preserved. The main iconography would appear to be the Buddhas of the Three Times, with Śākyamuni Buddha in the center (identifiable by the figures of Vajrapāṇi behind his left shoulder), with the other two Buddhas (Past and Future) in smaller size standing on the sides of the narrow, deep niche. A niche of the Buddha of the Three Times would definitely be Mahāyāna. This as well as the emphasis on the sets of multiple Buddhas would strongly indicate that Jauliāñ monastery had a strongly Mahāyāna component in the latter days of its existence during the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century.

Mohṛā Morādu, a smaller monastery but with some exquisite art remains, seems not to have continued with vigorous expansion following the renovations and additions to the main stupa and some large, impressive stucco Buddhas in the vihara area and a beautiful niche at the entrance. Jauliāñ, on the other hand was active and flourishing, especially with its subsidiary stupas, seemingly beyond the time of the Mohṛā Morādu renovations and additions, though this point could be further considered for refinement.

#### D. *Pippala: Stupa K*

Pippala is located between Jauliāñ and Mohṛā Morādu (Fig. 8.2).<sup>132</sup> Stupa K is outside the main monastery complex directly to the north (Fig. 8.18a). Much of the original stupa was ruined when Marshall discovered it, including the north side and almost half of the east and west sides connecting with the northern portion. What remains, as shown in the plan in Fig. 8.18a and in Fig. 8.18b, is primarily part of the podium on the south side. The square podium was judged to have been approximately 15 ft. on each side and some stucco images and pilasters remained at the time of Marshall's discovery.<sup>133</sup> According to Fitzsimmons, now only the masonry behind remains and that is his Type 5 (diaper). He notes that a "single, relatively large podium without staircase located next to a monastery is not found elsewhere at Taxila. The possibility must be raised that the stupa was originally built with a staircase and was the main stupa for the earlier monastery complex."<sup>134</sup> From the over-view published in Taxila<sup>135</sup> it would appear that the south wall had three main bay/niches framed by rather tall pilasters. If the stupa was square, then presumably there were originally three bay-niches with images on each side of the stupa. This scheme would resemble that of the podium of Stupa D5 at Jauliāñ (Fig. 8.14a, far left), except that each bay/niche of Pippala Stupa K has multiple images surrounding a large main Buddha, an arrangement seen used in some of the bay/niches with images added to the podium of the main stupa of Mohṛā Morādu.<sup>136</sup>

In the Pippala Stupa K, the two bays of the south side in Fig. 8.18b with the best preserved images show standing figures (at least one is a Bodhisattva) against the pilasters. The bay at the right in Fig. 8.18b has a seated dharmachakra Buddha with robe covering both shoulders and attended by two

<sup>132</sup> Marshall (1951), p. 365.

<sup>133</sup> Marshall (1951), pp. 366-367.

<sup>134</sup> Fitzsimmons (2001), pp. 37-38.

<sup>135</sup> Marshall (1951), III, pl. 99a.

<sup>136</sup> Marshall (1951), III, pl. 150b, which shows two cross-ankled Bodhisattvas flanking the large central dharmachakra Buddha and the remains of a lotus pedestal in the upper right, suggesting the presence of another image in the higher level, which was presumably the case on the upper left as well (now missing). Other panels show three Buddhas (larger one in the center) along the bottom, but the area above is all ruined, so it cannot be known if there were more images (specifically Buddha images) as seen in the Pippala Stupa K panel or not. *Ibid.*, pl. 152a, b.



standing Bodhisattvas. The next bay to the left (facing) has a dharmachakra Buddha with one shoulder bare and seated on a rectangular pedestal. He is accompanied by three surviving (with an indication that there were originally four) images in dhyānāsana Buddhas, each seated on a lotus pedestal. Two of the four are positioned on the same level as the main Buddha and the other two are positioned above and slightly inward. This grouping probably represents a five Buddha configuration. The way they are arranged suggests a spatial arrangement of four images positioned in a circle around the center (larger) image. This is a different way of configuring a spatial arrangement from that noted in the linear arrangements in Jauliān Stupas D4 and D1. Such configurations as the Stupa K panel can also be found among the stupas of Haḍḍa (see below) and appear in some panels of images on miniature stone stupas in China from around as early as the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century and continuing into the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Stylistically, the Pippala Stupa K images appear very close to the stucco podium sculptures at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.8b).

Judging from all these factors, we can suggest that these stucco images from Stupa K probably date around the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that it is removed from the main monastery complex is intriguing. Fitzsimmons suggests that it was from the earlier monastery at Pippala. Since the masonry is early (Type 5), it would appear that Stupa K was renovated later with the addition of stucco images, which may have a Mahāyāna emphasis. This configuration of Buddhas (probably five Buddhas) with four smaller ones suggesting a circular movement around the larger main Buddha is not seen in the remains of Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, whose five Buddha configurations all date prior to ca. 430. It would appear to be a new iconographic scheme that appears in the Taxila region around the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and shows in China ca. 430's or a little later.

### III. PESHĀWAR VALLEY (GANDHĀRA)

West of the Indus River the main sites of Gandhāran Buddhist monasteries lie in the Peshāwar Valley and its extension into the region of Swat (Fig. 8.19). For the purposes of the current study of the sets of multiple Buddhas and particularly the set of the five Buddhas, the sites yielding the most relevant remains are those of Takht-i-Bāhī and Sahri Bahlōl, as well as some independent stone carvings. We will first begin, however, with Thareli as an early example of a set of eight stupas, and later also examine the stupas at Ali Masjid, which are important in comparison with the stupas just examined at Jauliān as well as with those from Haḍḍa presented below.

#### A. *Thareli: Area C 106*

Some general features of Thareli are summarized by K. Behrendt: "Thareli ... is a large complex on the extreme northern edge of the Peshawar basin near the sites of Sikri and Jamāl Garhī ... It was first surveyed in 1881 by H. Garrick, but it was not excavated until the 1960's, by a Japanese team under the direction of S. Mizuno and T. Higuchi ..." There are "two major sacred areas, C and D, and no fewer than five monastic small sacred areas" ... and "more than 50 mountain *vihāras*."<sup>137</sup> We will only concern Area C106 here.

<sup>137</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 191.

### 1. Area C106: Data

Thareli has three stupa sites: a large stupa at Area C on top of the mountain, a large stupa at the lower part of Area D, and a smaller scale stupa complex discovered by the Japanese team at Area C106 located along the mountain pathway joining Area A and Area D. At Area C106 were found the stone bases of eight small stupas (size 1.8 m x 2.1m), aligned as four pairs in two rows running north-south: to the west are stupas i, iii, v, and vii and in the row to the east are stupas ii, iv, vi and viii (Figs. 8.20a, b). Flat paving stones had been placed to make a base or flooring for the site (apparently the paving stones also were used under the stupas, but this point is not made specifically clear even in the Japanese text of the report, except to note that these paving stones are referred to as “the base of the stupa complex”).<sup>138</sup> There are also the remains of seven small shrines placed in a regular arrangement surrounding the central group of eight stupas: shrines 1, 2, and 3 at the west; shrines 4, 5, and 6 at the south, and shrine 7 is at the east (Fig. 8.20b). It is not certain if there were more shrines, because the north side and the northern part of the east side were ruined and eroded. Shrine 3 is the largest (twice as large as the others, measuring 3.3m across the front). A circular stone plate (dia. 75 cm) was discovered just east of shrine 6. It had a hole in the center (dia. 7 cm) and four holes at the four quadrants near the edge. As noted by the excavators, it is obviously the remains of a chattra (umbrella) for one of the stupas with the central hole being for the yaṣṭi (central pole) and the four outer holes for holding the supports. Some fragments of Buddha images, architectural elements, and decorative stone fragments were also discovered at this site.<sup>139</sup>

Mizuno and Higuchi note “at least four periods of construction” for this site based upon their examination of the surviving paving stones that were placed in the stupa complex (Fig. 8.20b).

Period 1: Stupa i was the first and was independently constructed. Paving stones (originally apparently surrounded the stupa and were also underneath the stupa, though this latter point is not entirely clear) still survived at the east and south of Stupa i (to a width 30cm and 45cm respectively).

Period 2: Stupas ii, iii, iv, v and vi were built. Stupa iii was built on top of some of the paving stones that had been put down for Stupa i in Period 1. The paving stones, which are the main indicator of the periods of activity, were also increased in this period and were put around Stupas ii, iii, iv, v, and vi. Again, it is not clear whether or not the paving stones were placed first and the stupas built on top of them or whether the stupas were built first and the paving stones placed around them. It seems to be implied by the Japanese text that stupas ii, iii, iv, v, and vi were built after the expansion of the paving stones (which are called “the base for the stupa complex”). Certainly, the fact that Stupa iii partially sits on the paving stones on the south side of Stupa i establishes the time sequence between Period 1 and Period 2, which, however, may not have been very long.

Period 3: The paving stone area (“base of the stupa complex”) was expanded and Stupas vii and viii were built. According to Fig. 8.20b, Stupas vii and viii impinge over (or into) the paving stones from Period 2. Further, the “passage around the stupa complex” was enlarged to be 1.7 m towards the east and 1m towards the south and 0.9 m towards the west.

<sup>138</sup> S. Mizuno and T. Higuchi, *Thareli: Buddhist Site in Pakistan Surveyed in 1963-67*, Kyoto, 1978, p. 23.

<sup>139</sup> Mizuno and Higuchi (1978), pp. 22-23.

Period 4: “During the 4<sup>th</sup> period the platform (paving stones or “base of the stupa complex”) is further enlarged and shrines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 were built around the stupa complex.” The shrines were placed at a distance of 1.3 m to the east, 1.2 m to the south, and 1.6 m to the west of the stupa group.

From these observations, it was concluded that C106 was expanded over time and that the number of small stupas increased and shrines were finally built around the small stupa complex.<sup>140</sup>

## 2. *Dating*

Mizuno and Higuchi generally date this site to the “flourishing period” of the Kushans. According to Behrendt, Sacred Area C106, the largest of the Thareli “monastic small sacred areas” has phase II foundations (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.), and “can be dated approximately, and a relative sequence of construction is recognizable ... the area was founded with the construction of small stupa i, then a pavement was laid down and small stupas ii-vi were built on it, and finally small stupas vii and viii were added beyond the paving. The finds from this court are fully documented and there is considerable phase II sculptural evidence to show that the area was founded in phase II and that many of the added stupas were also built at this time. The last period of construction involved the addition of image shrines 1-7, which occurred in phase III [3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century], as indicated by structural typologies and the presence of devotional sculptures. It is certain that the surviving image shrines (the northern edge of the area has been lost to erosion) were constructed after all eight of the small stupas were in place, because the shrines nearly encircle the last of the small stupas to be added (vii and viii). Thus from the evidence preserved in this court, we know that monastic small sacred areas were being constructed in phase II ...”<sup>141</sup>

## 3. *Iconographic Considerations of Area C106*

Thareli Area C106 presents a very interesting case; it is relatively clear in its pattern of development and in the remains of the main monuments, which suggest the following:

- 1) Area C106 was started in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (perhaps mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half) with small Stupa i which had its own pavement;
- 2) Then period 2 paving stones were laid down and stupas ii-vi were built, with Stupa iii partially built over the paving stones for Stupa i.
- 3) In period 3 Stupas vii and viii were built, (also probably within phase II according to Behrendt), partially on or impinging on the paving stones of Period 2. Paving stones also enlarged the perimeter of the stupa complex.
- 4) Then the surrounding Shrines 1-7 were built after all eight stupas were constructed and the paving stones placed (Shrine 7 appears to partially be built over the paving stones of Period 3). According to Behrendt’s chronology, the seven shrines belong to his phase III (ca. 200-5<sup>th</sup> century)

Thus, the earliest construction was a single square stupa, then the pavement was enlarged and five more square stupas were added. It is clear that at this period of construction, the plan was to make two parallel rows, at least, 2 x 3 of more or less equal-sized square stupas. Perhaps the plan for the entire

<sup>140</sup> Mizuno and Higuchi (1978), p. 23.

<sup>141</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 194-196.

set was planned at that time or even at the beginning, and was completed later with Stupas vii and viii, possibly still during Behrendt's Phase II (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century), at which time the idea of a set of eight stupas, readable here as four rows of two stupas or two rows of four stupas, was present at Thareli in the Peshawar area.

These eight appear to be a carefully planned and constructed arrangement of stupas, and in that case they may represent a form of practice specifically planned in number and layout, such as the worship of the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya and/or the Buddhas of the eight directions. However, it is also possible, and perhaps more likely given the early date of these eight stupas, that they may refer to the original eight stupas made to hold the relics of the Buddha. In Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 on the top of the South Wall is a line of painted stupas, of which only the remains of four can still be seen (Fig. 5.23), but which may originally have been six (the six predecessors of Śākyamuni), seven (the seven Buddhas, including Śākyamuni), or eight (probably the eight original stupas).

Finally, shrines 1–7 (and possibly more, which were lost in the erosion of the hill on the north side) were added in phase III (according to Behrendt ca. 200–5<sup>th</sup> century). They were clearly intended to at least partially surround the stupas, three on the west, three on the south and one surviving on the east (and perhaps more, making eight or nine?). These may have held images which would complement the stupas, perhaps as the seven Buddhas, or else present a different grouping or set, such as events from the Buddha's life. It would appear that they were not randomly added, but planned to be a meaningful set to accompany the eight stupas. Considering the early date of the C106 site, it is perhaps most reasonable to conjecture that the eight stupas represent the eight original stupas and that the seven shrines are for the seven Buddhas. However, until more established, one can keep in mind the possibility of the other interpretations as well.

### B. *Takht-i-Bāhī*

Takht-i-Bāhī is one of the oldest monasteries of the Peshawar Valley. It is located in the hills northeast of the present-day city of Peshawar, near a major route leading into Swat (Fig. 8.19). In the later phases of Buddhism in Gandhāra in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century in particular, monasteries flourished in these hills. Takht-i-Bāhī was one of the great monasteries that experienced substantial expansion from ca. 200–ca. 450 A.D., and a number of major remains indicate important elements of the iconographic programs being produced during this period. The following are prime examples that, as far as can be ascertained from the archaeological record, the plans and the remains of images offer evidences that augment our understanding of the Buddhism and the selection of imagery being produced at this great site during the 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century. This will help to establish a working hypothesis for some of the major iconographic problems not only of the Buddhist art of Gandhāra, but also of this period in China.

The oldest part of Takht-i-Bāhī monastery is apparently in the Lower Stupa Court (Fig. 8.21a) with the Main Stupa P1 and some surrounding small stupas (as well as with Stupa M in Court XIV), probably dating ca. 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.<sup>142</sup> Around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (early in Behrendt's phase III) there was a major expansion that created the South Stupa Court X and the Vihara (Quadrangular Monastery) II.<sup>143</sup> Accompanying this expansion a processional path was established through the Lower Stupa Court IV

<sup>142</sup> Behrendt's phase II (Behrendt (2004), pp. 182–183.

<sup>143</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 183. A quadrangular monastery of similar plan was established at Jauliān and Mohrā Morādu near the end of Behrendt's phase II, i.e., ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. Both were designed and constructed according to a unified plan, and possibly, as suggested by Behrendt, by a single donor. Behrendt (2004), pp. 183–184.

and V to connect Vihara II with the South Stupa Court X, which was built higher up on the ridge.<sup>144</sup> At that time, in the Lower Stupa Court, Niches 1-9 were made (Fig. 8.21a).

Here we will comment on the arrangements of some of the image niches (the images themselves are gone) and their layout, first with respect to South Stupa Court X, and then in reference to the Lower Stupa Court, both of which, we recognize, are very difficult issues.

### 1. *South Stupa Court X*

At the same time that the main Stupa P2 was constructed in South Stupa Court X, a series of five, uniform-sized large niche-shrines were made on each side wall and the back wall of the court, thus enclosing main Stupa P2 on three sides (Fig. 8.21a). All were nearly equal in size, everything was proportional, and there was a total absence of small stupas.<sup>145</sup> According to Behrendt's Fig. 2 rendering of the plan of Takht-i-Bāhī, these 15 niche shrines were made in the early part of phase III of Behrendt's chronology,<sup>146</sup> and the small niches in between the large ones were made in middle Phase III (presumably ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>147</sup> Figs. 8.21b and c show views of the South Stupa Court X and its relation to the Lower Stupa Court and the Vihara, and Fig. 8.21d shows a section of the shrines on the west side of the South Stupa Court X.

The appearance of five large image shrines on each of three sides (west, south, and east) is similar to the configuration of five large seated Buddhas on the east, south and west sides of the main stupa at Jauliāñ discussed above. In discussing the Jauliāñ main stupa, it was suggested that such a configuration could be: 1) a repetition of the five-Buddhas three times (Past, Present, Future), or 2) taking the totality of images around the entire stupa into account, they could be part of a numerical group of the 25, 26, 28 or 29 Buddhas of the *Buddhavaṃsa* lineage. In the case of the Takht-i-Bāhī South Stupa Court X, for the totality of images to make a significant number, such as 25, 26, 28 or 29, the images in the smaller shrines (those spaces in between the 15 large shrines) would also have to be counted. If that is done, then a count of 26 is possible, which would suggest the 25 Buddhas (the lineage from Dīpaṃkara to Śākyamuni, plus Maitreya). Other combinations are possible if the spaces to the right of niche S1 and between S9 and S10 are counted (see Fig. 8.21a), making a total of 28 (that is, including the three predecessors of Dīpaṃkara in the lineage, but not Maitreya). However, without any surviving images in any of these niches, it may be difficult to decide this issue. As with the main stupa at Jauliāñ, though the totality of images might seem to be the most probable reading, it nevertheless remains remarkable that the five Buddhas are the most dominant configuration for all three walls (two sides and the back) in both Jauliāñ and in the South Stupa Court X at Takht-i-Bāhī.<sup>148</sup> It would appear

<sup>144</sup> Similar processional paths were made at Dharmarājīkā, Thareli, and Mekhasanda. Behrendt (2004), p. 185.

<sup>145</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 183-184.

<sup>146</sup> Behrendt suggests early in phase III, that is ca. 200 or slightly later, for this construction. Behrendt (2004), pp. 183-184.

<sup>147</sup> Behrendt provides the measurements of the shrines and the spaces in between: "All 15 image shrines are nearly identical in spacing (the south shrines are separated by about a 60 cm [1.9 ft.] gap, and the east and west shrines are separated by about 85 cm [2.7 ft.]), internal height (they range from 210 to 230 cm [6.8-7.5 ft.] from the floor to the base of the dome), and internal width (ranging from 141 to 152 cm [4.6-4.9 ft.] for the east and west shrines and 130 to 136 cm [4.2-4.4 ft.] for the south shrines). This level of consistency indicates that this assemblage was fabricated as a single unit. Behrendt (2004), p. 184, footnote 29 (with measurement conversions added).

<sup>148</sup> If five Buddhas are repeated three times, then this could refer to the five Buddhas in the Three Ages (Past, Present, Future). Though we do not know what the images might have been in these shrines and have no indication of their identity from any inscriptions, this hypothetical conjecture is one plausible case, if the images were not merely random

that this configuration using five Buddhas as the main element at Takht-i-Bāhī is earlier than that at Jauliān, whose stucco images around the main stupa probably date ca. 400.<sup>149</sup>

## 2. *Niche-shrines in the Lower Stupa Court*

Around the same time or a little later than the construction of the South Stupa Court X and Quadrangular Monastery (Vihara) II, a straight processional path linking the two areas was created in the Lower Stupa Court and “37 heterogeneous small to life-size image shrines were added singularly and in groups to the lower sacred area (image shrines 1-37).”<sup>150</sup> Though they may be “heterogeneous” and some made “singularly” and some made “in groups”, it is possible to consider these image shrines as possibly making meaningful iconographic groups, as suggested below.

### a. *Niche/shrines 1-9 on the Processional Path*

Shrines 1-9 are made as three rows of three images on the processional path near the stairs leading up to the South Stupa Court X (Fig. 8.21a). Two rows on the west side of the processional path are arranged back-to-back with shrines 1-3 facing west and shrines 4-6 facing east. On the east side of the processional path, shrines 7-9 form a set facing shrines 4-6. In total, this grouping forms three compact rows each with three images. This iconographic program is very likely to be representing the Buddhas of the Three Ages in three different sets (perhaps standing for the Triple World), or else again repeating Past, Present, Future (that is, representations of the Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future in the past, the present and the future). There is an example from Jauliān of Stupa D5 with inscriptional remains that indicate the repetition of the Buddhas of the Three Ages on each of the four sides, which, in the case of Jauliān Stupa D5 possibly represent the four directions of space (see above section II.C.2.c). Stupa D5 is dated relatively early among the Jauliān small stupas, perhaps 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. These three sets of three images along the processional path in the Lower Stupa Court at Takht-i-Bāhī are likely to be Kasyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya (as Buddha or as Bodhisattva), similar to Jauliān Stupa D5. It is also possible, though perhaps less likely at this date, that these shrines along the processional path held a triad of Buddhas with two attendant Bodhisattvas.

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or a heterogeneous combination of various groups, both of which would be highly unlikely given the planned, concerted, singular nature of the construction of this court. The shrines are likely to be one unified program of images and thus the shrine niches and their images would become a spectacular part of the entire arrangement of the space enclosing the Stupa P2. They would appear, if indeed they were well ordered according to the system of five Buddhas, to be a very powerful and spectacular expression for that time, both in terms of size and in sheer impressiveness created by similar repetitive images, which were likely life-size. If they were the five Buddhas, that iconography would possibly reflect a sutra such as the *Bhadrakalpika*, which was translated into Chinese in 300 (or 291) A.D. by Dharmarakṣa, and may have been of recent vintage in the Gandhāran region around the time this South Stupa Court X was being constructed. The five Buddhas of this *Bhadrakalpa* would refer to the first five of the thousand Buddhas of this Auspicious Eon, all of which are named and described in the *Bhadrakalpika*, and thus would be Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya (the next Buddha, shown either as a Buddha or as a Bodhisattva). There are also texts concerning the thousand Buddhas of the Past eon and of the Future eon translated into Chinese and used in Chinese paintings in Cave 254 at Tun-huang (with inscriptions) at least by the third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>149</sup> Behrendt places the South (upper) Stupa Court X within his phase III period work at Takht-i-Bāhī, i.e., ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century. Behrendt (2004), p. 183.

<sup>150</sup> Behrendt suggests these are from the “second period of phase III construction.” Behrendt (2004), pp. 184-185. Perhaps this can be interpreted to be ca. 250/300-350. Further, in footnote 30 on p. 185, he states that “masonry seems to clearly indicate that image shrines 18-24 were constructed after the raised south stupa court was in place. Image shrines 25-37 postdate the construction of the quadrangular monastery, because they all evenly abut the wall of this monastery.”



b. *Niche/shrines 24-18 along the South Wall of the Lower Stupa Court*

Following the making of the South Stupa Court X (in Behrendt's early period of phase III building at Takht-i-Bāhī), during the middle of Behrendt's phase III (ca. 300-350) a series of relatively large niches were made along the south wall of the Lower Stupa Court flanking the stairs leading up to the South Stupa Court X.<sup>151</sup> If one faces this row of niches, then niches 18-21 appear on the right and niches 22-24 appear on the left; that is, there are three on the left and four on the right as one faces the ascent of the stairs to the South Stupa Court X (Fig. 8.21a). This would appear to be a natural layout for the seven Buddhas: the three of the past eon (Vipaśyin, Śikhin and Viśabhū) reading from left to right (facing) in niches 24, 23 and 22, and the four of the present eon (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni) reading from left to right (facing) in niches 21, 20, 19 and 18. Niche 18 is the largest, and may well be appropriately so for Śākyamuni Buddha.<sup>152</sup>

c. *Niche/shrines 25-28 on the North Wall of the Lower Stupa Court*

These are four, relatively equal sized niches built against the north side of the Lower Stupa court and against the wall of the large Vihāra (constructed ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century) (Figs. 8.21a, b, color Pl. XII). These four niches flank the entrance into the Vihāra on the left as one enters the Vihāra. This arrangement could have been niches for the first four Buddhas of the present eon, which, in reading clockwise (circumambulation direction) would be Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni.

d. *Niche/shrines 29-37 on the North Wall of the Lower Stupa Court*

To the right of the entrance to the Vihāra is a bank of niches along the north wall of the Lower Stupa Court (Fig. 8.21a, b). They are numbered 29-37 on the plan in Fig. 8.21a. Eight of these niches are about the same, that is, relatively large size; only niche 35 is smaller. The layout may have been the eight Buddhas (seven Buddhas plus Maitreya) with the smaller niche #35 some possible separate, unrelated image, image group or narrative scene.

e. *Niche/shrines M8-M1 along the East and South Walls of the Lower Stupa Court*

The niches M8-M1 are large in scale and probably made in late Phase III or early Phase IV in Behrendt's chronology, i.e., ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> –early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 8.21a, e, f, g).<sup>153</sup> They certainly represent a step in the direction of colossal sized imagery.<sup>154</sup> Along the west wall of the Lower Stupa Court are niches M8-M4, making a series of five large niche shrines (Figs. 8.21a, e). These could refer to the five Buddhas of the present eon (Bhadrakalpa): the four Buddhas plus Maitreya (as Buddha or Bodhisattva). However, if we continue the series onto the south wall with the grand niches M3-M1 (Figs. 8.21f, g), constructed in the same period as M8-M4, then the total is eight, which could well refer to the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya, though the split by the change of wall somewhat forces the emphasis on 5 + 3 rather than 7 + 1.

<sup>151</sup> Behrendt indicates that "the larger image shrines were fabricated earlier" among shrines 1-37 in the lower stupa court. Behrendt (2004), p. 185. The "larger image shrines" include shrines 18-24 along the south wall of the Lower Stupa Court.

<sup>152</sup> We can note that the appropriate direction of reading would most likely be that of one circumambulating the court, therefore the way the niches are currently numbered is in Behrendt's plan reverse order. Behrendt (2004), fig. 2.

<sup>153</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 186.

<sup>154</sup> "The massive image shrines must have been expensive; for example, shrine M1's extant walls stand 8.7 m [28.5 ft.] tall and in order to even erect image shrines M4-M8, extensive foundations had to be built to extend the sacred area." Behrendt (2004), p. 186.

f. *Niche/shrines M14 and M11*

Niche M11 is in the northwest corner and M14 is in the southwest corner of the Lower Stupa Court. They are large niches made at the time of niches M18-M1. They could represent independent important images, such as Maitreya or Śākyamuni. On the other hand, they may be incorporated into the totality of the niche scheme for the Lower Stupa court, as described below.

g. *Niches on the Perimeter of the Lower Stupa Court Considered as a Totality*

If all the niches around the perimeter of the Lower Stupa Court are added together, the number comes to 29, which would include the three Buddha prior to Dīpaṃkara, the Buddhas from Dīpaṃkara to Śākyamuni, and the future Buddha Maitreya (as Buddha or Bodhisattva). Such a count would also not include Niche #35, the small niche on the north wall. The coincidence of the totality amounting to a significant series according to the *Buddhavaṃsa* text cannot be taken lightly, despite the fact that the construction of the niches took some time to complete and lasted from early to middle phase III (roughly from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century) and into late phase III in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (in Behrendt's chronology). Considering the enormous task of fulfilling such a scheme and making the images, most probably made of stone, this may not be difficult to believe. The initial plan made at the time of the expansion of the monastery by the South Stupa Court X and the Vihāra (Monastery II) probably stimulated the plan for the Lower Stupa Court, which over time was completed as the patronage allowed. The time spread necessary for completing this enormous task also allowed for the developing ideas of monumentality to result in the making of larger and larger niches, so that the latest niches to be made to complete the scheme were executed according to the criterion of colossal size that by the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century dominated the new construction in areas of Gandhāra.

It can be noted that if the scheme of the totality was set at the beginning of the project, then it is also clear that certain combinations were emphasized within the total number. Thus, the emphasis on the four Buddhas, three Buddhas, seven Buddhas, eight Buddhas and five Buddhas. These subsets within the greater total scheme impart both individuality to groups and unity to the whole in a scheme that has multiple levels of meaning. It could be that the scheme is to allow for two readings independently, so a practitioner or devotee could choose: the total or the separate groups—both would be possible.

The question would naturally arise, "Where would the lineage of 29 Buddhas start? Possibly at the right of the staircase going up to the South Stupa court X? or with Niche 24? There would be some difficulty in reading the total lineage and the various groups, because the identification of the Buddhas would be different depending on the beginning point. But perhaps that did not matter. And perhaps it does not matter where one begins, but the end is likely to be important to emphasize Śākyamuni and Maitreya. Each niche is its own realm, but as a totality the niche/shrines may emphasize the unitary cosmic elements of space and time, which may be an emerging expression of Mahāyāna.

3. *Southeast Stupa Court XIVii*

Court XIVii is a southeastern appendage of the XIV complex (Figs. 8.21a and 8.22a) located to the southeast of the South Stupa Court X. According to Behrendt it contains a "phase II" (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) Stupa M, but in the "second period of building during phase III" this court was expanded around the earlier small Stupa M.<sup>155</sup> Court XIVii was well photographed when it was found still intact in the

<sup>155</sup> "This small scared area can be dated to the early to middle part of phase III for several reasons..." Behrendt (2004), p. 221.

early 20<sup>th</sup> century and excavated by Hargreaves, so the original locations of much of the sculpture can apparently be determined.<sup>156</sup> Though there still needs to be more study done to reconstruct this court, a few indications and remains are of great interest in this present study.

The long western wall of court XIVii has a row of seven small image shrines (labeled a-g on plan in Fig. 8.22a). Along the shorter south wall are three slightly larger image shrines (labeled h, i, and j in Fig. 8.22a). On the north wall is a platform “K”, which probably held several images; “L” is an independent image shrine; “M” is Behrendt’s phase II (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) small main stupa, which probably originally was decorated with the phase II sculptural remains found in the court. Except for Shrine L, which is “medium” in size, the other image shrines are said to be relatively small and not of monumental size. The fact that this court does not contain large-sized image shrines is one reason, according to Behrendt, that it can be generally dated to the “middle part of phase III” (perhaps ca. 300-350).<sup>157</sup> Among the images found in XIVii were five medium and five small icons (presumably in schist, but this information is not given) and ten miscellaneous stucco heads, so that he suggests that “each shrine may have composed a single icon.”<sup>158</sup>

In the row of seven small shrines a-g along the western wall, shrines “c” and “d” both contained a stone platform base with images carved in relief (Figs. 8.22b, c). Each base was positioned “halfway back in the shrine forming the front face of a step [of the platform at the rear]. The icon was probably on top of the platform and affixed to the rear wall.”<sup>159</sup>

The front face of the stone platform image base from Shrine “c” shows eight standing figures in high relief lined up on a single base (total H. of platform base 27 cm [10 5/8 in.]). These figures are clearly the seven Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 8.22b). The front face of the stone platform image base from the contiguous Shrine “d” has five Buddhas (flanked by two kneeling donors), all in seated positions (Fig. 8.22c), with two of the Buddhas (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) seated on a lotus pedestal and the other three seated on a rectangular slab. In both cases, the mudrās of the images are varied (none have the dharmachakra mudrā), though symmetrically arranged. For the five Buddhas the scheme is (reading from left to right): robe in full sling with right hand on chest; dhyāna mudrā; the center image in abhaya mudrā; followed by another in dhyana mudrā and ending with the robe in full sling and right hand on the chest. Each image is apparently separated by a sāla tree motif that creates the “niche” for each. The kneeling figures at each end do not have the wide stretch to the legs as noted in the kneeling figures in the pedestal images of the stone Buddha from Sahri Bahlōl C in Fig. 8.11m.

For the seven Buddhas and Maitreya in the Shrine “c” relief, from left to right the scheme is (with regard to the right hand): full sling with hand raised to chest; abhaya mudrā; right hand hanging down; full sling; abhaya; down; full sling; and Maitreya in abhaya mudrā. It is interesting that these two different iconographic systems occur side by side in separate shrines of the same time period, probably ca. 250-350. This would appear to indicate that there was a variety of standardized groupings of Buddhas (with respect to the mudrās, though the dharmachakra mudrā is conspicuously lacking) in operation simultaneously by the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Buddhist art in the Peshāwar Valley area of Gandhāra. These remains are very important in establishing this fact.

<sup>156</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 220.

<sup>157</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 221. He also notes that the row of *in situ* stucco Buddhas at the base of the row of image shrines h, i and j (Fig. 8.22a) are similar in style to examples at Thareli (image shrine D7) and Mekhasanda. *Ibid.*, p. 221 and fig. 73.

<sup>158</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 220.

<sup>159</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 221.

The example from Shrine “d” with five Buddhas is especially relevant, because it gives credence that the grouping of five Buddhas was an established set known in Gandhāra probably by ca. 350. This can confirm the usage of this iconographic set not only at Takht-i-Bāhī, but also gives credence to the appearance of five Buddhas as a set in China from at least the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (Tai K’uei’s famous five Buddhas of the Wa-kuan ssu at Chien-kang in south China) and those that we have identified in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 from ca. 400-425. Further, it is of interest to note that the style of the standing Buddhas (Fig. 8.22b) is closely related to that of the monumental stucco Buddha from Niche No. 1 at Ping-ling ssu discussed in Chapter 3 as the earliest surviving image at Ping-ling ssu and dated independently to ca. 375-385 (Fig. 3.9).

It is probable that these seven small shrines a-g in Court XIVii refer to the series of the seven Buddhas and that the three slightly larger shrines h, i, and j on the contiguous south wall (Fig. 8.22a) contained the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present and Future), which, as we have been encountering at sites in Taxila, appears to have been a major configuration in Gandhāra from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards.<sup>160</sup> Judging from the iconography of Jauliān Stupa D5, probably dating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (see discussion in II.C.2.c), the central image of the three-Buddha configuration in shrines h, i, and j may have been Kāśyapa. However, other cases in Gandhāran sculptures are known to have Maitreya Bodhisattva in the center, so the arrangement could be variable.

If the shrines a-g each contain as their main icon one of the seven Buddhas, then, no matter which direction one reads the row (that is, from left to right or from right to left), Krakucchanda is the Buddha in Shrine “d” with the stone carved base of five Buddhas (Fig. 8.22a). Krakucchanda is the first Buddha of the Bhadrakalpa. Shrine “c” with the stone base of seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva, would be either Viśabhu (if reading from right to left, facing) or Kanakamuni (if reading from left to right). Perhaps one could think that in the direction of circumambulation of the court, Shrine “c” would be for Kanakamuni, though it is also probably as likely to be for Viśabhu as the last Buddha of a previous kalpa and therefore most clearly associated with the Buddhas of the Past (and not overlapping with the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa). It is also possible that the seven Buddhas are not read linearly, though that is usually the case, as also seen in various stone sculptures of Gandhāra (primarily Peshāwar area). The only one without doubt is Shrine “d” with Krakucchanda. In that case, we may be able to suggest that an image icon that has the five Buddhas in the base or pedestal has a probability to be Krakucchanda, and those with the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya may be identifiable as either Viśabhu or Kanakamuni. The great contribution of this row of seven shrines in Court XIVii is the fact that the five Buddha configuration is included in the base platform, and probably is the platform for Krakucchanda Buddha, the first Buddha of the Bhadrakalpa, who would most likely be the image of the central shrine (shrine “d”) of the group of shrines a-g.

#### 4. Court XX (*Court of the Three Stupas*)

Court XX was added in the late phase III (ca. 400-450) according to Behrendt’s chronology.<sup>161</sup> It contains one relatively large square stupa (P36) and four other smaller ones and, against the south wall, the

<sup>160</sup> It is, however, also possible to add the seven Buddha set of the west wall together with the three Buddhas of the south wall and have the Buddhas of the ten directions (of Mahāyāna sutras). This reading, however, is not so obvious, because of the unequal emphasis given to the two groups. Though it is an unlikely reading, it can nevertheless be considered as one possible reading.

<sup>161</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 188.

remains of four monumental stucco images which originally would have been about 18 ft. tall (about 6 meters).<sup>162</sup> This court shows a clear shift to the dominant usage of stucco, including the presence of the monumental stucco statues, which according to Behrendt were probably part of the original plan (i.e., not added later). Other finds include complex stone relief panels generally called “Miracle of Śrāvastī stele” following Foucher’s original assessment of their iconography, though clearly an identity has not yet been settled (see Chapter 6, section II.3.c. for more on this subject), images on a lotus pedestal, and eight Buddhas in schist, six of which show the dharmachakra mudrā (considered a relatively late innovation). These schist images in Court XX could indicate a date overlap with the relatively late stucco production.<sup>163</sup> Such parallel production of schist and stucco was also noted above with respect to the similar pilasters on the stucco subsidiary stupas at Jauliāñ and the seated Buddha in schist from Sahri Bahlōl C in Fig. 8.11m.

Stupas P36, P37 and P38 have remains of stucco sculpture (Fig. 8.23a). Stupa P38 is largely ruined and P36 survives only with the base level, which is held up with lion protomes and has large pilaster niches, two of which still retain their stucco images: one large dhyānāsana Buddha, and the male and female auspicious pair, the male in military garb and the female holding a cornucopia (Figs. 8.23a, d).<sup>164</sup> Stylistically, the images appear to relate to those of Stupa A15 at Jauliāñ, suggested above to date ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Stupa P37 is of particular interest for our current study.

#### a. *Stupa P37*

Stupa P37 is a square stupa (4’ 6” square) with decoration and images in stucco (Figs. 8.23a, b, c). The base (podium, with a “basement”) is moderately high and has (apparently on each of the four sides) a row of four seated Buddhas each separated by a short corinthian pilaster.<sup>165</sup> These may be interpreted as the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa repeated four times. Their appearance presumably on all four sides could refer to the four directions. It has already been noted that Fa-hsien made references to the four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa during his journey in Gandhāra and Central India ca. 400–415. This base (podium) section is topped by a row of brackets supporting a prominent cornice (eave) above which is the base that supports the drum and dome of the stupa. So this stupa has two levels with images, different from the (probably) later stupas at Jauliāñ that have three levels, such as D4 and D1 (Figs. 8.16a, b, e and 8.17a). The second level of Stupa P37, though set back, is higher and more richly

<sup>162</sup> Aurel Stein describes the uncovering of this area at Takht-i-Bāhī. A. Stein, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, Frontier Circle, 1911-1912*, Peshāwar, 1912, pp. 2-3. Also see Behrendt (2004), p. 218.

<sup>163</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 218-219.

<sup>164</sup> H. Hargreaves describes P36 as follows in his excavations report: “The greater part of the western half of the court was occupied by a large *stūpa*, 21’ square, larger, therefore than the main *stūpa* at this site. The base is almost complete; but the frieze, except on the south, is entirely destroyed. Here, to a height of 4’, the lowest terrace still exists. It is of the usual type—a low plinth with crouching lions supporting a cornice with plain mouldings above which is a series of nine panels separated by Indo-Corinthian pilasters, the whole surmounted by a modillion cornice. the ornamentation is entirely in stucco and, with one exception, each panel contains a well-modelled figure of the Buddha seated in the attitude of meditation (*dhyāna-mudrā*). The exception is the central panel which shows a variation entirely novel, for instead of a Buddha figure or legendary scene we have here what has been generally accepted as a representation of Kubera and his consort...” H. Hargreaves, “Excavations at Takht-i-Bāhī,” *Annual Report, 1910-1911*, Archaeological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1914, pp. 36-37.

<sup>165</sup> Hargreaves notes: “...the lower frieze shows four panels separated by Indo-Corinthian dwarf pilasters with acanthus capitals. In each panel is a seated Buddha figure, either in the attitude of meditation (*dhyāna-mudrā*) or with the right hand raised in the attitude of imparting protection (*abhaya-mudrā*).” *Ibid.*, p. 36.



decorated than the podium level below.<sup>166</sup> Above the finely shaped, quite high and relatively plain molding, is a row of five trabeated (trapezoidal) niches held up by complex double-level corinthian pilasters. The lower pilasters support the trabeated arches. This configuration is visible in Fig. 8.23a on two sides (and presumably is repeated on all four sides). The corner columns are larger, double-level corinthian columns.

Inside the five niches on each side of the second level is a standing image, which appears to be a Buddha, at least on the side shown fully in Fig. 8.23b. Each image has a clear tribhaṅga posture and the body shape is revealed by the shaping of the robe closely over the form. There is variety in the hand gestures as follows (facing, right to left):

right hand

- a) raised against chest (robe in sling mode)
- b) lowered to side
- c) lowered to side
- d) raised against the chest (robe in sling mode)
- e) raised in abhaya

left hand

- lowered, holding hem
- raised, holding hem of robe near shoulder
- raised, holding hem of robe near shoulder
- lowered (holding hem?)
- raised, holding hem of robe near shoulder?

There is considerable variation among these five standing Buddhas, which tends to give them some individuality. The images with right hand lowered to the side (indicated to be a *vara mudrā* by Hargreaves) and left hand raised and holding the hem of the garment is a mode also seen in a number of the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 standing Buddhas (Figs. 4.7, 5.45, 7.22) dating from ca. 400-428.

Above the row of trabeated niches and the architrave molding are the brackets supporting the cornice (eave) and terrace that holds the drum and dome. These brackets are particularly large and complex. Remnants of the circular drum still survive as seen in Fig. 8.23a, which shows a molding and the niches with small dhyānāsana Buddhas alternating with short pilasters. There are eight dhyānāsana Buddhas according to Hargreaves.<sup>167</sup> Some sutras translated in Chinese before 425 mention the Buddhas of the eight directions of space.

Takht-i-Bāhī Stupa P37 is likely to date to a period earlier than Jauliān D4, D1 and A16 etc. stupas (Figs. 8.16a, b, e, 8.17a, and 8.15), which are all stupas with three levels of bases with images, but probably later than Dharmarājikā stupas K1 and N4 (Fig. 8.3b). It does not include animal protomes like Stupa P36 (Fig. 8.23c) and it does not appear to use the trilobed arch niche, which is seen in the stupas at Ali Masjid discussed below as well as in Jauliān Stupas D1 and D4. It does, however, have a higher lift to the moldings and relatively complex brackets. Stupa P37 is an important example of the stupa

<sup>166</sup> Hargreaves describes this level as follows: "... The upper frieze is more varied and shows five standing figures between elaborate double superposed pilasters, namely, a lower short square-shafted Indo-Corinthian pilaster, the acanthus capital of which supports a similar circular—or octagonal- shafted pilaster. Each figure stands as if under the flat roof of a *vihāra* whose sloping sides spring from the base of the upper pilaster. Three of the figures have lost the *uṣṇīṣa*, but all undoubtedly represented the Buddha in various *mudrās*, with right hand upraised (*abhaya-mudrā*), with right hand extended to the ground palm outward (*vara-mudrā*) and with the right hand concealed in the robe..." *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>167</sup> "The spring of the dome is also preserved and shows the familiar motif of sitting Buddha figures in the attitude of meditation separated by pilasters. Many of the figures still preserve their original red colouring and are as perfect as if they had but yesterday left the craftsman's hand. On the south face of the *stūpa* on the mouldings of the upper frieze is a stucco relief unfortunately much damaged. Traces of eight figures still remain, one on the left being an adoring male figure." *Ibid.*, p. 36.



perhaps dating ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century or ca. 400 that has a relatively prominent and elaborate configuration of five Buddhas in standing form, and possibly some with the vara mudrā.

b. *Four Monumental Stucco Standing Buddhas*

Four 18 ft. (approx. 6-7 meters) standing Buddhas occupied a low platform (4½ feet wide) in front of the high south wall of Court XX.<sup>168</sup> They appear to have been a single group without individual shrines, as can be discerned from the remains of four pairs of feet seen in the excavation photos in Figs. 8.23e, f. Two colossal stucco image heads also survived. Fig. 8.23f is one of these Buddhas heads (the one at the far left in Fig. 8.23f) as now preserved in the Peshāwar Museum (measuring about 26 inches from chin to forehead). These images were made of clay and stucco and attached to the wall surface by means of large wooden beams. The large square hole (at the level of the upper back) for each of the four Buddhas can still be seen in Fig. 8.23e. These monumental statues probably formed a group of four colossal Buddhas, the most plausible identification being the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, a theme noted by Fa-hsien during his travels in Gandhāra and India ca. 400-ca. 415 A.D. They would have been raised to monumental status, possibly combining other, more cosmic features, though this is difficult to discern at present. The head style is close to those of the large Buddhas on the main stupa at Jauliān in Taxila (Fig. 8.8h), though there is a sense of clean-cut lines for the features and solid, smooth, firm mass to the structure of the head compared with the more delicate nuances of the Jauliān heads. This could be a regional distinction as these colossal images of Court XX probably also date close to ca. 400.

5. *Conclusions: Takht-i-Bāhī*

The remains at Takht-i-Bāhī provide crucial data for the understanding of the usage of sets of multiple images that appear to have been a major element in Gandhāran art primarily from ca. 200-ca. 450 (or later) in the Taxila and Peshāwar areas (and also in Haḍḍa, as we will see below). The remains at Takht-i-Bāhī that were relatively well excavated reveal the chronological sequences of development. With regard to the study of the five Buddhas, these may have been of iconographic significance ca. 200 with the major shrines of S1-S15 in Court X, followed by the important and clear evidences in the stone relief panel in the image base of shrine “d” in Court XIVii of ca. 250-350, and finally seen in the rows of standing images in Stupa P37 in Court XX of ca. 400. In addition, it is clear that other configurations of sets of Buddhas are prevalent: possibly the Buddhas of the Three Times, the four Buddhas (of the Bhadrakalpa and/or of the Four Directions), and the Seven Buddhas (or eight, including Maitreya as Bodhisattva or Buddha). These combinations seem to have formed major iconographic systems for the imagery from ca. 250-450 at Takht-i-Bāhī. Other iconographic forms were also present, such as the stone complex steles (often called Śrāvastī composite scenes, but likely to be a more varied iconography which has not yet been deciphered), and the so-called small stone triad type images that may have been used in small niches here and there. Takht-i-Bāhī establishes, along with the remains at Jauliān in particular, the appearance in the Taxila and Peshawar regions of Gandhāra of the set of the five Buddhas, as well as the relative certainty of the Court XIVii Shrine “d” identification of that shrine’s main Buddha icon as Krakucchanda, first of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. The Shrine “d” stone platform base with the depiction of the five Buddhas provides especially clear evidence for the set of

<sup>168</sup> Stein (1912), p. 3, where it also seems to erroneously mention that six pairs of feet of the colossal images were found.

five Buddhas around 250-350 in a major monastery in Gandhāra. This provides plausible reason to believe that the set of five Buddhas in China in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (the Tai K'uei set at the Wa-kuan ssu in Chien-kang, capital of the Eastern Chin) and in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu from ca. 400-428 is likely to be the iconography of the Five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa.

### C. *Sahrī Bahlōl Site B*

Sahrī Bahlōl is one of the three large monasteries in the plain of the Peshāwar Basin between the city of Peshāwar (Puruṣapura) and the hills to the north, where Takht-i-Bāhī and many other “mountain monasteries” were located (Fig. 8.19). It was a major monastery of the region. Sahrī Bahlōl comprises several individual sites (Sites A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H), none of which were completely (or some not even well) excavated. The area still under the modern village has never been excavated (color plate XIII).<sup>169</sup> Further, there is somewhat limited photo documentation, though quite a number of sculptures are believed to have come from the Sahrī Bahlōl sites, and very little of the architecture has been preserved. According to Kurt Behrendt, there appears to have been activity into his late phase III period (ca. second half of the 4<sup>th</sup>–early 5<sup>th</sup>) and many statues were “recontextualized” in phase IV (late 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>170</sup> Site A has an interesting row of *in situ* statues along the front of the entrance to a two-celled shrine (possibly a relic shrine) comprised of seven large Bodhisattvas (apparently all standing) and one seated Buddha set back at an angle in the wall.<sup>171</sup> This is an unusual iconography, perhaps referring to the seven Buddhas in their Bodhisattva (pre-Buddha) form. For the present study, however, Site B offers several particularly important remains of images that are related to stupas.

#### 1. *Stupa with Five Buddhas*

The example of the stupa in Fig. 8.24 shows dhyānāsana Buddha images in stucco on the lowest level: five Buddhas on each of the two sides in the photo and presumably on all four sides of the square stupa. Each image is set in the bay-niche separated by short corinthian pilasters that appear to be the abbreviated style similar to examples known from the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century at other sites such as Takht-i-Bāhī and Jauliān. It appears to be more massive than Stupa P37 at Takht-i-Bāhī in Fig. 8.23a. Though still relatively small, the Sahrī Bahlōl stupa has a high “basement” (lowest projecting foundation) and several rows of moldings below the row of images, thus producing a substantial height to the base portion, which may be an earlier feature. A finely bracketed cornice eave appears above the plain moldings of the architrave. The architecture is relatively unadorned and would appear to be of a slightly earlier style than the stupas of Jauliān D1, D4, A16 and Takht-i-Bāhī Stupa P37 (Fig. 8.23a), but later than the stupas K1, N4 and J1 at Dharmarājikā (Fig. 8.3b). This would suggest a dating of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>172</sup> This stupa is important as confirming the usage of the five Buddha iconography as a

<sup>169</sup> Site A was excavated in 1906-07; site B was excavated in 1909-1910, both by D. Spooner; Sites C and D were excavated by A. Stein in 1911-12. Behrendt (2004), pp. 300-301.

<sup>170</sup> Behrendt (2004), pp. 294-295.

<sup>171</sup> Behrendt (2004), figs. 54-55.

<sup>172</sup> Behrendt dates this Sahrī Bahlōl Site B stupa to the middle to late period of his phase III (ca. 4<sup>th</sup> to first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century) on the basis of comparison with the production in Taxila, especially to Jauliān phase III small stupas, and generally corroborated by numismatic evidence (mostly late Kushana, Sassanian and Kidara-Hun). Behrendt (2004), p. 222. Also see E. Errington, “Numismatic Evidence for Dating the Buddhist Remains of Gandhāra,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology, Papers in Honour of Francine Tissot*, ed. by E. Errington and O. Boppearchchi, London, 1999-2000, p. 213.

main motif in stupas in the Peshāwar region of Gandhāra around that time. In this case, as with the other cases discussed earlier (Takht-i-Bāhī and Jauliāñ), it would seem that each side was a discrete representation of the five Buddhas facing the four directions. Thus, when circumambulating the stupa, the devotee would begin the five anew with each turn around the stupa. It is also possible that the five Buddhas naturally imply the 1,000 Buddhas—the five Buddhas being the first five of the 1,000 Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa. Such an implication would, however, clearly imply Mahāyāna ideas, and it is not yet certain if that is the case here.

## 2. “Main Stone Stupa” with Four Buddhas

A group of stone sculptures from Sahrī Bahlōl Site B has been located with reasonable certainty to the base of a stupa called “the main stone stupa” by Francine Tissot in her 1990 study of these sculptures (Figs. 8.25b, c, d, e). In her remarkable work, using the original grid plan of the site drawn by Moolchand during excavations of Sahrī Bahlōl Site B in 1909-1910 (Fig. 8.25a which includes proposed restoration by F. Tissot) in conjunction with old photographs, numbered sculptures, drawings and reports, she was able to propose a partial reconstruction of this stupa.<sup>173</sup> She noticed from old photographs of Site B kept in the India Office Library in London that there were pictures of four Buddhas which bore numbered marks that corresponded with the same numbers on the grid plan made by Moolchand during the excavation of Site B. Matching these, she found that these four Buddha sculptures likely formed a group of four and that they would have formed a row along the north face of the base (podium) of the ruined stone stupa in front of which they were found. Measurements are known for only one of the four (Figs. 8.25b, f), whose height is 89 cm, though Dr. Tissot judged all of them to be probably about 90 cm in height with slight variation.<sup>174</sup> She describes each in detail, noting the differences in style and motifs. Further, in dating this group, she noted particularly the factor that the dhyāna mudrā is generally thought to be earlier than the dharmachakra mudrā, and in commenting on the possible identity, she remarks that they (the mudrās) are “known” to represent special scenes of Buddha’s life.<sup>175</sup> She ends the discussion of these sculptures by saying: “If these four buddhas, as is physically proved by their numbers, were part of the base of the main stone stupa of Sahrī-Bāhlol, I must propose a late dating because of the presence of the dharmachakra mudrā, thus end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>176</sup>

This discovery not only brings to focus a magnificent group of stone sculptures that have reasonable certainty in regard to their original location, but that also appear to offer a significant contribution to the study of the sets of multiple Buddhas and to unlocking the clues for the individual identities of certain Buddha sculptures from the Gandhāran corpus that are at present largely unidentifiable. I would like to suggest as a corollary to Dr. Tissot’s superb initial research that this series of four stone Buddhas are most likely to be Śākyamuni and his three predecessors, that is, Kāśyapa, Kanakamuni and Krakucchanda, the first four Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa, which are mentioned specifically by name and other attributes in various texts, such as the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra* (translated into Chinese the first time by Dharmarakṣa in 300 A.D.), where the 1,000 Buddhas of

<sup>173</sup> F. Tissot, “The Site of Sahrī-Bāhlol in Gandhāra (Part III)”, in *South Asian Archaeology*, 1987, ed. by M. Taddei with assistance of P. Callieri, Rome, 1990, Part 2, pp. 737-764.

<sup>174</sup> Tissot (1990), p. 750.

<sup>175</sup> Tissot (1990), p. 752.

<sup>176</sup> Tissot (1990), p. 753.

this eon are individually discussed with full descriptions. Furthermore, in the opening chapter of the *Dirghāgama*, that is, the *Ch'ang a-han ching* 長阿含經, translated into Chinese in 413 by Buddhayaśas together with Chu Fa-nien, specifically names the three predecessors of Śākyamuni together with him as the “four immortal men, perfectly enlightened” of this present eon (the Bhadrakalpa):

“... In this present kalpa there is the Buddha called Chū-lou-hsün (Krakucchanda); also [there is the Buddha] called Chū-na-han (Kanakamuni); also [there is the Buddha] called Chia-yeh (Kāśyapa). I now also in the present kalpa [have attained] complete, unexcelled enlightenment ... (... 此賢劫中有佛名拘樓孫. 又名拘那含. 又名迦葉. 我今亦於賢劫中成最正覺 ...)”<sup>177</sup>

This passage is followed in verses with:

... Now in this present kalpa, 今此賢劫中  
[there are] countless years, 無數那維歲  
there are four great immortal men, 有四大仙人  
pitying the multitude of sentient beings and therefore came, 愍衆生故出  
Chū-lou-sun, Na-han, 拘樓孫那含  
Chia-yeh and Shih-chia-wen... 迦葉釋迦文 ...<sup>178</sup>

The *Ch'ang a-han ching* (of the *Dirghāgama*) is one of the primary Āgama texts of the Sarvāstivādin school, which is known to have been prevalent in Gandhāra during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In the case of the four Buddhas from the north side of the “main stone stupa” of Site B, the original setting on the stupa very likely was reflected in their position as marked in the excavation grid (Fig. 8.25a—see the four arrows closest to the north edge of the stupa). If we follow this order in the way of circumambulation (clockwise), the figures align from right to left (facing the monument) in the order of reading from Fig. 8.25b to 8.25c to 8.25d to 8.25e, as Dr. Tissot has suggested. If we attempt to identify these four statues as the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, then it is necessary to determine whether the sequence begins at the west end of the north side (facing, right end) or at the other end. Either system might be possible, especially because we do not know what kind of configuration of images the other sides of this stupa had originally. However, there are several independent factors that suggest the former, or “circumambulatory” direction of reading, is the most likely identification system. Certainly a chronological (linear) order is typical of the order of presentation in the texts mentioned above. However, there are also a few other factors that suggest that Śākyamuni is the last Buddha of the row (at the east end) and not the first, as explained below.

It is readily observable that all the Buddhas are similar in that they each have a circular head halo and sit with legs crossed on a rectangular pedestal. Some distinction between them is made by the fact that the Buddhas at each end of the row are in dhyāna mudrā with their outer robe covering both shoulders, and the two inner Buddhas are in the dharmachakra mudrā with the outer and inner robe covering only the left shoulder and leaving the right shoulder bare. Further distinguishing elements are afforded by the design elements of the pedestals and by the figures portrayed in the front panel of each pedestal. These panel reliefs show the following for each consecutive Buddha beginning at the west end:

<sup>177</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. I, (T 1), p. 1c.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2a.

No. 1) Buddha (Fig. 8.25b and f) seated on a cushion; corner elements of the pedestal are missing (hole for attaching this element can be seen on one side, possibly in this case for repair), a cloth covering the throne under the cushion forms a slanted cluster of vertical pleats as it falls over the front of the throne on both sides of the group of figures in the center. The figures are six worshippers symmetrically flanking the central image, who is seated on a rectangular pedestal in Bodhisattva garb in abhaya mudrā with the right hand and holding a flask in the left hand. He has a circular head halo.<sup>179</sup> He is most probably Maitreya Bodhisattva.<sup>180</sup>

No. 2) Buddha (Fig. 8.25c) sits on a cushion with a narrow, horizontal, beaded, decorative band around the center. The pedestal is missing the corners (which were probably attached separately) and between the slanting pleats of the pedestal cloth appears the panel relief of six worshippers flanking a seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva whose right hand is in the abhaya mudrā and who is holding a flask in the left hand. Again, this is likely to be Maitreya Bodhisattva in a different posture from that of Buddha No. 1.<sup>181</sup>

No. 3) Buddha (Fig. 8.25d) sits on a cushion with a similar decorative, narrow, horizontal band around the middle as seen for No. 2. The corners of the pedestal survive and are portrayed as the full front of a lion turning his head inwards towards the center. A young boy reaches up to the lion apparently offering some food.<sup>182</sup> The cloth in the center of the pedestal forms clear slanted pleats at the end, and some curved folds of the cloth stretch toward the center. The figural relief in the center shows four kneeling figures symmetrically disposed on both sides of the central figure who is garbed in Bodhisattva dress seated on a rectangular pedestal in dhyānāsana. It is difficult to determine if he is holding a flask or not. It could, like the other two above, be another form of Maitreya, or it could be Siddhārtha, who is frequently shown in Gandhāran art in the meditation posture.<sup>183</sup>

No. 4) Buddha (Figs. 8.25e) is seated on a grass mat, and the corners of the pedestal are corinthian pilasters with two rows of leaves. Between the pilasters are three dhyānāsana Buddhas. The central one is seated directly on the base slab and the other two Buddhas each sit on a low rectangular pedestal. All three Buddhas have an individual head halo and the central Buddha also appears to have a circular

<sup>179</sup> This feature is clearly visible in Ingholt and Lyons (1959), fig. 236. This image is, however, mistakenly said to have come from Takht-i-Bāhī in Ingholt and Lyons (1959), p. 116.

<sup>180</sup> An alternative possibility could be that the image is that of Khema, the future Śākyamuni at the time of the Buddha Krakucchanda. According to the *Buddhavaṃsa*, Khema (the future Śākyamuni Buddha) “went forth in his [Krakucchanda Buddha’s] presence” and Buddha Krakucchanda predicted Khema’s future Buddha hood “in this Bhadda-eon” (i.e., in the Bhadrakalpa). *Buddhavaṃsa*, p. 84. In this case, the seated Bodhisattva in the center of the pedestal flanked by worshippers could be Khema. However, this figure is holding a flask, so it is most likely to be interpreted as Maitreya Bodhisattva, perhaps indicating that Maitreya will be the fifth Buddha in the Bhadrakalpa (also mentioned in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Bhadrakalpika* noted above). This raises the problem of the identity of Maitreya and whether or not there can be other images with similar identifying features, such as holding the flask.

<sup>181</sup> If it were Śākyamuni at the time of Kanakamuni Buddha (the second Buddha of the Bhadrakalpa), the central figure in the pedestal could be Pabbata who, according to the *Buddhavaṃsa* “went forth” under Kanakamuni Buddha, who also predicted his future attainment of Buddhahood in the Bhadrakalpa. *Buddhavaṃsa*, p. 87.

<sup>182</sup> This form is known in some other Gandhāran pedestals. A rare, beautiful, early example appears in the recent German exhibition: *Gandhara—Das buddhistische Erbe Pakistans*, curated by M. Jansen and C. Luczanits, Mainz, 2008, No. 74 (dated 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century in the catalogue) from Shnaisha, Swāt, and now in Peshāwar University Museum. Here, the chubby, curly haired boy and lion licking from the offered food pot are very large. The cushion and throne cloth are very simply portrayed: the cloth with only a few central swag lines and the cushion with only with a horizontal, loose, wavy incised line).

<sup>183</sup> If the central figure is associated with the earlier lives of Śākyamuni, then it could be Jotipāla, the “brahmin youth”, who “went forth” under Kāśyapa Buddha, who predicted his Buddhahood in the Bhadrakalpa. *Buddhavaṃsa*, p. 90.



body halo (a form that is known and used in the greater Gandhāran region by the late third or early 4<sup>th</sup> century, and is also known in the Buddha paintings in Complex B at Kara-tepe datable to ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and in the Buddhas in the horizontal wooden panel from Lou-lan in eastern Central Asia, which dates not later than ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>184</sup> Each of the three Buddhas has a simple tree canopy (a branch of leaves on each side of the head), but those over the central Buddha are a little larger. Two kneeling worshippers flank the central Buddha and a worshipper (possibly a monk) stands at each end of the ensemble. The three Buddhas in the pedestal are likely to be the three predecessors of Śākyamuni. The *Buddhavaṃsa* in Chapter XXVII (Miscellany on the Buddhas) verse 18, in the words of Śākyamuni Buddha, who is the speaker (voice) of the *Buddhavaṃsa* states: “In this Bhadda-eon there have been three leaders, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana and the leader Kassapa.”<sup>185</sup> It is also possible, though less likely, that the three dhyānāsana Buddhas represent the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present, Future), perhaps as seen in the Stupa D5 at Jaulian, which dates around the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (see above, II.C.2.c) and is inscribed with the names of Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni as two of the three Buddhas.

In assessing the individual identity of these four main Buddhas, it is particularly interesting to note that among the four seated Buddhas on this row from the north side of the “main stone stupa” of Site B, only the Buddha No. 4 (Fig. 8.25e) is seated on a grass mat on the top of his pedestal. All the others sit on a cushion (probably the first Buddha in Fig. 8.25b does as well, though it is somewhat damaged). The grass mat is associated with the ascetic episode of Śākyamuni’s life, which none of the other Buddhas had, so this feature can be considered to support the identity of No. 4 as Śākyamuni in this case.<sup>186</sup> Though the identification is not totally conclusive, and there could be six possible different ways of ordering the other three Buddhas, still the most likely alignment is in chronological (lineal) order.

Elements that relate to dating this group include the double row of leaves in the corinthian style pilaster in Fig. 8.25e. This form probably post-dates the pilaster form of Dharmarājikā Stupas K1 and N4 (ca. 200-350) but pre-dates the forms seen in Jauliān Stupas A16, D4 and D1 of ca. first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Buddha heads do not have the ultra-refined line for the hairline and features of the face as seen in the stucco heads of the Jauliān main stupa, which is probably late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Though there are some mild stylizations of the drapery folds, they do not reach the degree of stylization as seen in the colossal images of the Jauliān main stupa. Perhaps a tentative dating around the mid- 4<sup>th</sup> century can be suggested for the four stone Buddhas of the Sahrī Bahlōl main stone stupa. Importantly, this stupa makes a strong statement concerning the four Buddhas, probably the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, possibly reflecting a text or texts, such as the *Dirghāgama* (*Ch’ang a-han ching*), *Buddhavaṃsa* and/or *Bhadrakalpika*, though it is more likely to be relating to the first, the *Dirghāgama* whose opening chapter strongly fits the designation of the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. It may be that each of the four sides had a similar configuration, repeated four times in

<sup>184</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 184 and p. 411 respectively.

<sup>185</sup> *Buddhavaṃsa*, p. 97.

<sup>186</sup> The usage of the grass mat is a generally good marker for Śākyamuni, however, it may not be consistent throughout all of Gandhāran art, and certainly there are cases where the five monks at Buddha’s first teaching are shown also sitting on grass mats. It appears that at least some of the large seated Buddhas on the main stupa at Jauliān also sit on grass mats, so it is difficult to assess in that case. However, in the case of Sahrī Bahlōl Site B “main stone stupa”, this iconographic feature seems to be strictly observed and applied only in one instance, thus making a separation between Buddha No. 4 and the other three.



the four directions. It is also possible that there was a cumulative arrangement of 16 on the base, plus others on an upper level that would have added up to 28 (for example, 12 or three on each of four sides of an upper level would produce this result). In that case, Śākyamuni as the last image on the north side would have been the end of the lineage, if one read the stupa from top to bottom, which is, however, not likely. It is also apparent that Maitreya is not included among the four Buddhas of the Site B stupa, unlike the case of the five Buddha configurations seen in the main stupa at Jauliāñ and subsidiary stupas such as Jauliāñ A15, D4 and D1 and Takht-i-Bāhī shrine “d” in Court XIVii and Stupa P37. It would appear that the “main stone stupa” of Sahrī Bahlōl Site B puts more emphasis on the first four Buddhas of this kalpa and relegates Maitreya as a Bodhisattva to be represented in the pedestal or pedestals of several of the Buddhas. This would appear to apply to the *Dirghāgama* text or possibly to the *Bhadrakalpika* text.

Considering the few clues for the identity of the fourth Buddha as Śākyamuni, then several other components become meaningful: No. 1 and No. 4 (Krakucchanda and Śākyamuni) are both portrayed in dhyāna mudrā and have both shoulders covered by the outer robe. The two middle Buddhas, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa (Nos. 2 and 3 respectively) are both in the dharmachaka mudrā and have the right shoulder bare. Also, concerning the figures in the pedestals, we can make the following tentative suggestion: 1) Maitreya as seen in No.1 is the early form known of Maitreya (it appears on the coins of Kaniška), therefore appropriate for the first Buddha; 2) Maitreya as cross-ankled is a later form, and generally associable with Maitreya in Gandhāra (and very strongly so in Central Asia and China), therefore possibly an appropriate form for the second Buddha; 3) the dhyānāsana image may be Siddhārtha, which would be appropriate for the third Buddha as the immediate predecessor of Śākyamuni.

If these postures, robe depiction and pedestal figures are taken as identifying features of the respective Buddhas Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni, then it is conceivable that other images, whose identities are not presently known, are comparable and hence possibly identifiable, at least in some cases (things frequently change, but for a certain time and place they may hold true)—and a few examples are presented below. Also, this system may have been repeated on the other sides of this “main stone stupa” of Site B and may have been used at other sites within the Sahrī Bahlōl monastery area (other monasteries could have their own, possibly different, system of identification). It is difficult to say how individualistic the iconography was with respect to each site, but it is also likely that there was a process of universalizing the iconography, though this would take some time, thus possibly resulting in several different systems arising and being used until one system was in time accepted as the best, and even then it could change later. Meanwhile, there remains the evidences of the “various systems” which were being tried out in this formative period of Buddhist iconography, in a period that is also seeing the rise of Mahāyana ideas presented in art forms. In this case, the identifying system fits best with the straight-forward chronological layout, one possible reason being its relatively early date and/or its strong association with a particular textual tradition.

The four-Buddha configuration is an important iconography in China and figures prominently in the central pillar caves of Kansu, which will be studied in the next volume of this series. Here it can be noted that the four Buddhas do not appear to be a particular set of Buddhas in the remaining images of Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, though there are some places that are missing images, so it cannot be entirely certain. Apparently the iconography of the five Buddhas that include Maitreya (as Buddha and as Bodhisattva) is more in favor at this time in Ping-ling ssu.

Finally, from the tentative identification of these four stone Buddhas as the Four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, there may be some important consequences regarding identifying other images in the Gandhāran school. In searching for other possible matches for the iconography as described above in the four Buddhas of the main stone stupa of Site B, I have found some that match, especially with No.3 (Kāśyapa) and No. 4 (Śākyamuni). I have yet to find examples matching with No.1 and No. 2. A sample list is presented below:

No. 3 (Kāśyapa Buddha):

- i) stone Buddha in Brundage Collection, Chicago (now Asian Art Museum);<sup>187</sup>
- ii) stone headless Buddha, Lahore Museum, no site of origin mentioned, H. 3' 7½", in center of pedestal a seated Bodhisattva in meditation flanked by two worshippers on each side, cushion with beaded band around the middle, pedestal legs missing;<sup>188</sup>
- iii) stone Buddha with head halo missing, Lahore Museum (No. 29), H. 36½". Pedestal has seated Bodhisattva flanked by two worshippers on each side (Bodhisattva is considerably broken, but seems to have had both hands in front in meditation and not to have legs pendant (as suggested by Ingholt);<sup>189</sup> beaded band around cushion, part of lion foot pedestal leg remains only on right side (facing);<sup>190</sup>
- iv) stone Buddha complete except for broken right knee; traces of paint and gilt near eyes; Peshawar Museum No. 227, perfect head halo, originally from Sahrī Bahlol (specific excavations site not given), H. 29 ¼", cushion with beaded band around middle. Seated dhyānāsana Bodhisattva (without flask) with crown and round head halo, flanked by pair of worshippers on both sides. Well preserved stylized lion (full front view with head and legs) at the two corners of pedestal (See Fig. 8.25h).<sup>191</sup>
- v) stone Buddha with broken edge of head halo on his right side and missing legs of pedestal; No. 1877, Peshawar Museum, originally from Takht-i-Bāhi; H. 29 ¼". Bodhisattva in meditation in center of pedestal flanked by one kneeling worshipper on each side; cushion with beaded band around middle.<sup>192</sup>
- vi) stone Buddha with spear-shaped flames in outer rim of head halo (broken on proper left edge), H. 66 cm, cushion with refined zigzag decoration in narrow band around middle, frontal lion leg pedestal (relatively realistic); seated Bodhisattva with round head halo in meditation in center of pedestal, flanked by two worshippers on each side.<sup>193</sup>
- vii) stone Buddha with most of head halo lost, now in private collection in USA; H. 100 cm; cushion with beaded band around middle, lion protomes as pedestal legs; Bodhisattva in meditation in center of pedestal flanked by two worshippers (monks?) on each side.<sup>194</sup>

All of these Buddhas are in dharmachakra mudrā, all have the right shoulder bare, all have a seated dhyānāsana Bodhisattva in the center of the pedestal (with flanking worshippers—one or two on each side) and all have a lion or lion-footed pedestal (though images in Lahore [Ingholt 251] and Peshawar [Ingholt 249] have missing edges), and all have a cushion seat with narrow decorated band (usually beaded) around the middle.

<sup>187</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), text fig. XVI-1; no mention of site of origin.

<sup>188</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), fig. 251.

<sup>189</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), p. 119.

<sup>190</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), fig. 247; no original site mentioned.

<sup>191</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), fig. 248 and p. 119; Kurita (2003), II, fig. 194.

<sup>192</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), fig. 249.

<sup>193</sup> Kurita (2003), II, fig. 237, where he suggests "probably from Bajaur".

<sup>194</sup> Kurita (2003), II, fig. 238, no site mentioned.

## No. 4 (Śākyamuni Buddha)

- i) stone Buddha completely missing head halo; Seattle Art Museum, grass mat for a cushion, pedestal legs are corinthian pilasters. Filling the entire space between the pilasters on the front of the pedestal are three dhyānāsana Buddhas (central one on a grass mat), and each with a pair of worshippers and a lotus (?) above the shoulders.<sup>195</sup>
- ii) stone Buddha with partially broken halo over his right shoulder; Peshāwar Museum No. 1928, H. 27", originally from Takht-i-Bāhī;<sup>196</sup> grass mat for cushion,<sup>197</sup> pedestal has corinthian pilasters for legs; entire front of pedestal between the pilaster has three dhyānāsana Buddhas separated by a sala tree, a seated Bodhisattva at the left (facing) in abhayā mudrā, at the right (facing) in dharmachakra mudrā; kneeling worshipper at each end.<sup>198</sup>
- iii) stone Buddha with halo mostly broken above right shoulder, British Museum OA 1880-71, H. 91.5 cm, original site not known;<sup>199</sup> seated on grass mat with vine leaves at corners; pedestal legs are corinthian pilasters; space between pilasters on front face of pedestal filled by five seated figures (three Buddhas and two Bodhisattvas), each on a rectangular pedestal and separated from each other by a tall lotus, and a sāla tree branch hangs at each end of the row near a standing worshipping monk. Three Buddhas alternate with Bodhisattvas who appear to be Maitreya with flask and abhayā mudrā, and Bodhisattva (Padmapani?) with lotus and abhayā mudrā (Fig. 9.24a).

All these examples are seated in dhyāna mudrā with both shoulders covered and have three dhyānāsana Buddhas in the pedestal. In two cases there are also two seated Bodhisattvas. In all examples the Buddha sits on a grass mat on top of the pedestal, which has corinthian pilasters rather than lions or lion feet as in the pedestal of the other three Buddhas from the main stone stupa at Sahrī Bahlōl B (Figs. 8.25b, c, d).

With regard to the "main stone stupa of Sahrī Bahlōl Site B, there is a sense that the iconography may still be related to Hīnayāna traditions, based, for example on the *Dirghāgama*. This could indicate that it is relatively early in dating, but at a time when the dhyāna mudrā and the dharmachakra mudrā were both about equally used. The increased appearance of Bodhisattvas in later Gandhāran art, especially with a focus on Maitreya, the Buddha with two Bodhisattvas, etc., would seem to indicate changes possibly coming from the influence of the Mahāyāna. The iconography of the four Buddhas is observable in a number of examples in sculpture from Gandhāra proper and appears to be one of the major iconographic types of numerical sets. It should be noted that there are other iconographies besides the numerical sets in the art of all these monasteries, but they are not the subject of this particular study here. Along with the depictions of major events of the Buddha's life, such as the Visit to the Indraśaila Cave and descent from the Trayastriṃśas Heaven and others, the sets of multiple Buddhas did, however, appear to play a major part of the iconographic schemes in the art both in the stupas and as individual groups of niches and shrines.

<sup>195</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), text fig. XIII.

<sup>196</sup> Ingholt and Lyons (1957), fig. 234.

<sup>197</sup> Ingholt suggests it refers to the enlightenment scene. Ingholt and Lyons (1957), pp. 115-116.

<sup>198</sup> Ingholt suggests that "the three Buddhas and two Bodhisattvas may represent an abbreviated version of the five Dhyāna Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; ..." Ingholt and Lyons (1957), p. 116.

<sup>199</sup> W. Zwalf, *A Catalogue of the Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum*, 2 vols., London, 1996, II, fig. 31 and I, pp. 90-91.

This “main stone stupa” at Sahri Bahlöl would have been a magnificent, impressive structure with such large stone Buddha images on the plinth. It would have offered quite a different effect from the stucco imagery as seen in the stupas of Takht-i-Bāhī and Jauliān and even at Sahri Bahlöl, all of which may be later in date. The close up view of Krakucchanda in Fig. 8.25f and Kanakamuni in Fig. 8.25g show the subtle yet strong character of both the body and the skillfully rendered drapery whose rib-like folds have balanced tension and flexibility as they move around and across the broad, rounded forms of the figure. These sculptures represent the finest of the stone sculpture of Gandhāra, and as a set, we owe our thanks to Francine Tissot for bringing them into the light of their original setting where they offer perhaps one of the best ensembles probably of the four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa that we currently have in Buddhist art.

Though it is still difficult to be precise about the dating of Gandhāran sculpture, a general placement for the Sahri Bahlöl Site B four sculptures of the “main stone stupa” can be indicated by comparison to others of similar style where the evolution, usually quite subtle, of some elements can suggest a relative dating within a broad chronological development. For example, the dhyanāsana Buddha (probably Śākyamuni) from Takht-i-Bāhī in Fig. 8.25i appears stylistically relatively close to the four Buddhas of Site B, but the folds of the drapery are more lyrical and more widely spaced with less tension and formalized tendency than seen in the drapery configurations of the four Buddhas of Site B. Such characteristics as seen in the Takht-i-Bāhī image relate to the style seen in the Kara-tepe Buddha in Fig. 8.8d dating ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> to ca.-mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. Further, an element such as the hem patterns of the cloth falling on the pedestal in front of the Buddha, is slightly simpler in the Takht-i-Bāhī image than in the four Buddhas of Site B, and the wavy cloth from the left wrist is rather more subdued in the former than in the latter. These features are also apparent in the pedestal fragment in Fig. 8.25j, and are not as developed as seen in the Kanakamuni Buddha of the main stone stupa of Site B (Fig. 8.25k). Still further evolution shows in the Buddha in Fig. 8.25m where the hem patterns take on a life of their own with exaggerated shapes and more nervous movements. Similarly, the rib folds over the right leg show a tendency to make patterns where two folds are joined in a “wishbone” effect. This kind of mannered, unnatural patterning is known in Chinese Buddhist art by the 420’s in sculptures in Kansu. This would indicate that its appearance in Gandhāra is likely to be earlier.

Stone sculpture within the Peshāwar area is so inter-related and seemingly dependent on one or more schools of master sculptors who could have been working for several decades, that the stylistic evolution can be relatively slow and relatively subtle. By paying close attention to even the smallest changes we can probably witness the trends over a period of decades and not just a period of a few years. If we suggest the Takht-i-Bāhī Buddha in Fig. 8.25i as possibly dating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, perhaps during the early phases of the great and extended period of expansion at that monastery, then the four sculptures of the Site B “main stone stupa” could be considered as dating ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup>-mid 4<sup>th</sup> century period, and the more developed style of Fig. 8.25m as ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It is especially interesting to note, with regard to the dharmachakra mudrā, that the hand formation of the Kāśyapa image in Fig. 8.25d shows the back of the left hand and also has the webbing between the fingers clearly revealed. This is also the case for the Kāśyapa in Fig. 8.25h (also apparently from a Sahri Bahlöl site), which probably dates a little later than the Kāśyapa of the “main stone stupa” of Site B in Fig. 8.25d. The Buddha of Fig. 8.25h also has the back of the hand facing forward, though with a little change in the spacing and length of the fingers of both hands. The shift towards showing the left hand more from the side and the fingers of the right hand bending over, as seen in the Buddha in Fig. 8.25m, reveals

the direction of the step by step changes in the evolution of this mudra that are taking place in the Peshāwar area.

#### D. *Ali Masjid*

Two beautiful stupas, a medium-sized stupa (Figs. 8.26b, c), and a smaller one known as Stupa No. 6 (Fig. 8.26d) decorated with stucco molding, protomes, and image niches with sculptures from the site of Ali Masjid in the Khyber Pass (Fig. 8.19) provide superb examples of stucco stupas in the Gandhāran area. Fig. 8.26a shows a view of the front of Stupa No. 6 with a glimpse of the medium-sized stupa behind. As we will see below, they closely relate to some stupas at Haḍḍa and afford comparisons with some of the smaller subsidiary stupas at Jauliān and also at Takht-i-Bāhī, though with some differences in style and iconographic programs. In old photographs of the Ali Masjid stupas, both of these stupas show the stucco facing quite well preserved and the decoration surviving up to the drum portion of the dome. According to K. Behrendt, “Ali Masjid can be placed in phase III (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century) on the basis of numismatic evidence of two coins of Vasiska (242-260 C.E.).”<sup>200</sup>

##### 1. *Medium-sized Stupa*

When Fig 8.26b is combined with Fig. 8.26c we can see the entire length of the wall surface on one side of the medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid. Fig. 8.26c shows part of the stairway (at the front of the stupa) and the angle of the stairway with the left front wall, as well as the corner of the front wall and left side wall. Fig. 8.26b shows the extension of the left side wall towards the rear as well as providing a peek of the top of the stupa preserved up to the lower part of the circular drum, which contains some portion of ruined image niches. Fig. 8.26a shows part of the rear of this stupa behind Stupa No. 6.

The left side of the medium-sized stupa revealed in these photos has seven image niches on each of the three levels (called Levels A, B and C here). The podium (Level A, the lowest level) is composed of seven bays separated by short corinthian pilasters with a rather flattened capital. Each of the seven bays contains a triad of dhyanāsana Buddhas, the central one slightly larger than the two attendant Buddhas. This configuration is somewhat unusual to see in stupa podiums and it is not clear what the likely iconography would be. Buddha triads do appear in Jauliān Stupas D4 and D1 (Figs. 8.16c, 8.17c), which date in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but they are not presented in the same manner. In the case of the Ali Masjid stupa, rather than standing for representations of specific events of the Buddha's life, since the triads are all repetitively similar, they could simply be representations of the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present and Future), or, because there are seven of these niches, the main Buddhas could refer to the Seven Buddhas, perhaps each accompanied by a predecessor and the subsequent Buddha, or by two predecessors.

The bracketed cornice eave of the podium is quite prominent and creates a clear separation from the two layers above, which are the two base levels (Levels B and C) of the stupa proper, a feature also noted in Jauliān Stupas D4 and D1. Level B is supported by very well fashioned lion busts (protomes) with grasping paws and open mouths, very similar in style to the protomes of Stupa P36 at Takht-i-Bāhī (Fig. 8.23d). The pilasters of Level B are the same as those on the podium (Level A),

<sup>200</sup> See E. Errington, “Numismatic Evidence for Dating the Buddhist Remains of Gandhara”, in *Silk Road Art and Archaeology, Papers in Honor of Francine Tissot*, ed. by E. Errington and O. Bopearachchi, 1999-2000, p. 197.



but the rounded column pilasters of the upper level (Level C) have the “persepolitan” capitals with finely fashioned back-to-back recumbent bulls.

Level B has seven seated images in alternating trabeated and trilobed niches set between corinthian pilasters. Of special interest in this medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid is the fact that the central (trabeated) niche of Level B has a seated ascetic Buddha, who without doubt must be identified as Śākyamuni (the only Buddha to be characterized by the ascetic experience). He appears to have two attendants inside the niche, unlike all the other niches, which have no attendants. All the images are in the dhyāna mudrā except for one: the Buddha seated at the right of the central ascetic Śākyamuni. That Buddha appears to have his right hand raised onto his chest (or touching the hem of his robe as it crosses the chest). This is a gesture known in the Buddhas in the stone reliefs of shrines “c” and “d” at Takht-i-Bāhi probably dating around the 250-350 period (Figs. 8.22b, c).

In the upper level (Level C) there are also seven alternating trefoil and trabeated niches. All have seated Buddhas (without an ascetic Śākyamuni). All the Buddhas are in dhyāna mudrā except for the central one located just above the ascetic Buddha in Level B below. This central Buddha in Level C appears to have his right hand in the full sling mode with his hand on his chest holding the hem of his robe. Like the similar image at the right of the ascetic Śākyamuni in Level B, this different gesture distinguishes this Buddha image from all the others in this row, which are in dhyāna mudrā. Though the hands are somewhat broken in both of these Buddhas with the full sling mode of robe, it seems clear that the left hand was lying over the left leg and was not part of a possible dharmachakra mudrā in this case. It can be noted that the gesture of the right hand raised to the chest and holding the edge of the robe that crosses the chest appears in one image in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (Fig. 4.49).

Iconographically, the seven niches on the two upper levels (Levels B and C) would almost certainly indicate the seven Buddhas, but here they do not appear to have been lined up in chronological order, since Śākyamuni would, in that case, be at the end (or beginning) of a row as the last of the seven Buddhas. But in Level B the central niche contains the ascetic Buddha representing Śākyamuni. Although it is not clear concerning Level C, the central niche above the ascetic Buddha could also represent Śākyamuni, though it is not clear concerning the identity of the Buddha with the full sling mode and right hand touching the chest in either Level B or Level C. It is possible that this posture singles out Śākyamuni Buddha in Level C, but this does not account for the appearance of a similar Buddha in Level B. Certainly this image would seem to have a definite distinction compared to the other dhyānāsana Buddhas. However, it is clear that in Level B the order of the seven Buddhas is not linear. Perhaps there is an indication of two different periods of Śākyamuni’s life: his early ascetic period (Level B) and his enlightened Buddha period (Level C).

It is difficult to suggest what the ordering scheme would be for the other Buddhas, since the last one in relation to time, that is, Śākyamuni, is in the center of this configuration, at least on Level B and possibly also in Level C. If one considers the totality of images around each level of the stupa, then seven niches times three sides would produce 21 Buddhas in total, which is not a pertinent number. If the Buddhas on the front face of the stupa were included, there would be an addition two Buddhas for each level (making 23 per total in each row) a number that is also not apparently meaningful. It is possible that there were additional niches on the sides of the staircase which could be added to the count (part of a niche can be seen on the side of the staircase in Fig. 8.26c). However, be that as it may, the important point to observe here is that in Gandhāran art of this time (probably second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century), the scheme (principle) governing the order of the seven Buddhas does not necessarily follow the chronological sequencing, a factor we also saw at work in Jauliān Stupas D4 and D1 of first



half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but one probably not used in Sahrī Bahlōl B with the four Buddhas of the “main stone stupa.” This is an important point to observe, as we see the same possibility in the Group 20 five Buddhas in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 5.57), which also has an ascetic Buddha who appears in the center of the configuration of five Buddhas. The chronologically linear scheme does not have to pertain in all cases; it appears that there are many possible variations and that different sites, and sites at different periods, may present different iconographical schemes. The point is, even if it is hard to determine which scheme is being used, there probably is a scheme, and these images are not merely decoration or random choices, as has been the general opinion regarding these multiple images on the stupas of Gandhāra since the time of Foucher. This is an important and very interesting issue which will continue to engage us in this study.

Finally, the circular drum (it appears to be circular on a rectangular base) of the stupa rests on the terrace at the top of Level C. Though little of the drum seems to survive, fortunately the simple circular molding and a few remains of image niches can still be seen in Fig. 8.26b, thus indicating that images surrounded the circular drum. The issue of the iconography of the niches on a circular drum will be discussed more in detail with Stupa No. 6 below, where the drum niches survived in good part.

The whole stupa is covered with a coating of thick plaster which is quite well preserved at the time that these old photographs were taken. The trefoil arched niche has a semi-circular inner edge at the top and a peak on the outer side. The trabeated niches have the sloping jambs and a trapezoidal lintel beam above. They are boldly and simply fashioned and there are no further figures or ornamentations in or surrounding the niches (with a possibly exception for the ascetic Buddha niche), so the effect is one of clarity, simplicity and a measured, coherent rhythm that creates a rich and yet orderly effect. Stylistically, this medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid is somewhat similar to Jauliāñ Stupa A16 (Fig. 8.15), but different from the more richly complex figural stupas of Jauliāñ D4 and D1 (Figs. 8.16a, b, 8.17a, b). It may tentatively be placed around the mid to second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and becomes consequential in relation some stupas at Haḍḍa, to which the Ali Masjid stupas appear most closely related, as will be discussed below.

## 2. *Stupa No. 6*

The smaller of the two stupas, Stupa No. 6, is seen in front view in Fig. 8.26a (the back of the medium-sized stupa is partially revealed behind). Fig. 8.26d shows the corner of the right side wall meeting the back wall (at far right in the photo).<sup>201</sup> From Fig. 8.26a it is clear that most of the left side (facing the staircase) of the stupa is damaged and destroyed. Only the right side wall is fully shown in addition to the front with the two-stage staircase. It appears to be a square base stupa on top of a rectangular platform base that extends a bit in front with the stair access to the top of the base from where there is another short stair projection at the second level (the square base part of the stupa itself). The second level of stairs would bring the worshipper up to the level of the circular drum/dome of the stupa. This style of small stupa is different from those at Jauliāñ, but is very similar to some at Haḍḍa. Access by stairs to the drum/dome level of the stupa is also known at Rawak Stupa in Khotan, which probably dates around the early 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Fig. 8.26d shows the entire right side of Stupa No. 6. The lowest level (base or podium) has a row of six trefoil niches with stucco images, each one apparently with a dhyānāsana Buddha. If they are all

<sup>201</sup> The photo is taken from the rear where it meets with the better preserved right side wall (appearing at the left of the photo). The two stupas, the medium-size stupa and stupa No. 6 are back to back with each other.

Buddhas, they may be the Buddhas of the six-directions (referenced in some early Mahāyāna sutras), that is, the Buddhas of the four-directions, plus the zenith and nadir. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition, they could be considered as the six predecessors of Śākyamuni. It is possible that both schemes are meant simultaneously. It is also possible that if all the niches are added together, there results a significant number, such as 24 Buddhas, but this would entail the presence of some niches on the sides of the staircase and it is not possible to check this.

The bracket cornice eave of the platform holding the stupa *per se* is quite wide and we can see the exposed kañjūr stone slabs (Fig. 8.26d). The depth of the terrace created by the eave emphasizes the prominence of the base and is somewhat similar to the proportions of Stupas K1 and N4 at Dharmarājikā (Fig. 8.3b), though the elaboration of niches is far more developed than in the K1 and N4 examples. Lion busts of a much smaller size than in the medium-sized stupa support the next level, which is the base of the stupa itself. It has four deep trefoil arched niches on the right side (and presumably on all three sides except the entrance, which has one niche on each side of the staircase). The trefoil arches are lifted up on short pilasters to attain the added height suitable for containing a standing image. This particular style of niche with short pilasters supporting an arched niche is also used in Chinese art in the stone stupas of Liang chou dating to the 420's-430's, though only for seated and not standing images (Fig. 7.42). The larger pilasters that separate each bay are well fashioned and heavy; the three internal ones have a corinthian capital, while the corner pillars have well-formed "persepolitan" capitals with back to back recumbent animals (probably bulls).

The image in the niche on each side of the corner pilaster between the rear and right walls of the second level of Stupa No. 6 can be seen in Fig. 8.26d. A standing Buddha in abhaya mudrā appears in the niche on the right wall and a standing Bodhisattva remains in the niche on the rear wall. This Bodhisattva is likely to be Maitreya, and it is likely that all the other niches (now empty, destroyed, or not visible in the photo) were standing Buddhas, but this cannot be confirmed. The sequence of four images, that is of three Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva, on one wall is seen in A15 at Jauliāñ, east side (Figs. 8.11a, b). The iconography of this arrangement is difficult to discern. Perhaps in the case of Stupa No. 6, there is a combination with other walls to make a meaningful set. Adding all the possible niches together beginning with the standing Buddha on the right of the right wall and ending with the Maitreya Bodhisattva at the left end of the rear wall, yields a number of 12 or 14, which does not appear to be well-known for a set.

Above the (unbracketed) cornice of the second level is the terrace holding the circular drum. The base supporting the circular drum seems to have been square and there may have been a row of lions or animals, but this portion is almost entirely broken. The circular drum has a high circular base molding and a circular arrangement of deep trefoil arched niches containing seated images. Each niche is separated by a corinthian pilaster and there may have been lions supporting the trefoil arch niches, similar to Stupas D4 and D1 at Jauliāñ (Figs. 8.16a, 8.17d, e). Estimating from what we can see in the photographs, it is possible that there are 10 niches, perhaps an indication of the 10 directions. One of the images appears to be a Bodhisattva.<sup>202</sup> If the ten directions are indicated, this would definitely be a Mahāyāna configuration. The Buddhas of the ten directions are commonly cited in Mahāyāna sutras translated into Chinese before 425. Nowadays there are not many surviving drum/dome elements in the stupa architecture of Gandhāra and Afghanistan. This Stupa No. 6 at Ali Masjid suggests that by ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the circular drum section had niches with images with Bodhisattvas and

<sup>202</sup> Sometimes two Bodhisattvas are shown in a row with three Buddhas in Jauliāñ stupas D4 and D1. It is possible that in Stupa No. 6 there were two Bodhisattvas together with eight Buddhas.

Buddhas, thus clearly supplanting the usage of reliefs (often of Buddha's life scenes) seen in the drum section of the early stupas of this area in the first and second centuries A.D. The remains of a circular drum on Stupa P37 in Court XX at Takht-i-Bāhī, dated above to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, appear to show eight seated Buddhas.

Like the medium-sized stupa, there is no excess ornamentation or filling of the spaces with other images, so it retains a classical balance of plain areas and adorned areas; that would appear to be a characteristic of the stucco stupas of the middle phase of niche/image decorated stupas, following the type represented by Dharmarājikā stupas K1 and N4 and J1 (early phase) as the early stage and before the later stage of Jauliān Stupas D4 and D1. This might then suggest a dating for the Ali Masjid stupas to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. in the Peshāwar Valley. From the appearances of the standing Buddha on the right side of Stupa No. 6 (Fig. 8.26d), there may be some similarity with the stone Buddha torso found at Mekhasanda, which can be considered to be a relatively early image (possibly ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>-mid 4<sup>th</sup> century or earlier).<sup>203</sup> Though there is some hint of possible Mahāyāna imagery in the usage of possibly ten niches around the dome, the other number groups are consistent with earlier configurations and not particularly identifiable as relating to Mahāyāna concepts or Mahāyāna texts.

#### *E. Conclusions: Peshāwar Valley*

From Thareli to Ali Masjid, we can see in the examples presented above, the outlines of a development in the area of Peshāwar of the iconography of the five Buddhas and elements that are related to the early Mahāyāna texts (as known from the translations into Chinese prior to ca. 425).

Thareli monastery has an interesting example of eight stupas, which, considering its date in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, is probably a representation of the original eight stupas. An important early example (probably ca. 250-350) in shrine "d" of Court XIVii at Takht-i-Bāhī establishes the usage of the five Buddhas as an iconographic set associated with the lineage of Buddhas, in this case probably the first five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. Even the South Stupa Court at Takht-i-Bāhī has five shrines on each of the three surrounding walls (other than the entrance wall), showing some significance to the number five, either as a discrete unit or as part of a total that indicates a longer lineage span. Both Sahri Bahlōl Site B and Takht-i-Bāhī have examples of five Buddhas in stupas that probably date around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or ca. 400 A.D. Sahri Bahlōl Site B has a magnificent set of four Buddhas, which may well be the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. They appear to date to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, possibly the early part. The Ali Masjid stupas discussed here seem to belong to the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. They offer several important factors. In the medium-sized stupa there is the likely presentation of a lineage of seven Buddhas that is not linear (since Śākyamuni appears in the center of the row, and is definitely identifiable by the ascetic form), thus indicating a more complex sequencing of images. In Stupa No. 6 the drum portion retains some of the original configuration of niches with images encircling the dome. There appears to have been ten such niches (with at least one Bodhisattva and others probably Buddhas), which is a strong indication of the representation of the ten directions, a feature linked with Mahāyāna texts.

<sup>203</sup> Behrendt (2004), p. 136 and Fig. 66 (from shrine 21). Also Mizuno (1969), pl. 36 no. 2.

## IV. AFGHANISTAN: HAḌḌA

The region of Haḍḍa, near the present city of Jellalabad, west of the Khyber Pass in present-day eastern Afghanistan, is rich in Buddhist remains that have still not been thoroughly explored (Fig. 8.27). However, it is an area, like that of Taxila (east of the Indus) and ancient Gandhāra (Peshāwar Valley, west of the Indus) that is particularly pertinent for the study of the five Buddhas as well as other sets of multiple Buddhas. Unfortunately, in most cases practically nothing remains of the upper portion of the stupas of Haḍḍa, so it is usually not possible to consider an overall image scheme for most stupas.

The materials available currently come primarily from the excavations by Jules Barthoux undertaken in three consecutive winters of 1926, 1927 and 1928.<sup>204</sup> He excavated more than 530 stupas with about 6,000 sculptures (shared between French and Afghan governments, then kept in the Museum in Kabul and in France housed in the Musée Guimet). Materials from the more recent excavations of the stunning materials at Tapa-i-Shotur in Haḍḍa are of immense interest, but a full report of these excavations has yet to appear and, regrettably, the site is now devastated by war. Prof. Zémalyalai Tarzi has written on the Tapa-i-Shotur site and also presented his excavations of the site of the Great Stupa (Tope Kalān) at Haḍḍa. Perhaps there is hope for the future in uncovering some of the still buried sites in the Haḍḍa area.

Haḍḍa is known to have been the ancient Nagarahāra, famous in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries to the Chinese and the Chinese pilgrims who traveled to the Chi-pin area, especially in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. These Chinese monk travelers, through their writings, have been our eyes on the ground for the time from ca. 400 to 425 in particular. We have frequently noted the invaluable accounts by Fa-hsien and also translated the biography of the important though brief account by T'an-wu-chieh (see Chapter 6, section II.2.c.16)a) above). Others, such as Hui-lan (who studied with a famous monk in Chipin), and Chih-meng, visited the area,<sup>205</sup> which was noted as having a tooth relic and the cranial bone of the Buddha and also the cave of the Naga (Dragon) with the projection image of the Buddha<sup>206</sup> and others as noted in the introduction to this chapter.<sup>207</sup>

The general Buddhist site at Haḍḍa is dominated by the gorge of the Dār-Ūnta river. A group of 13 sites were investigated and excavated by Barthoux on the plateau south of the river. In recent years Tapa-e-Top-e-Kalān (TTK), site of the largest stupa at Haḍḍa, was partially investigated by Z. Tarzi (Fig. 8.28). Of these, seven sites are of particular interest to us, some with regard to the five Buddha configuration, others for tracing the variants of the seven Buddhas and for the three Buddha configurations. It would appear that these sites hold many clues regarding the development of certain iconography and are extremely relevant not only for understanding the developments of iconography and style of imagery, but also for the various elements in the design of the stupa in 5<sup>th</sup> century China. Though this is a preliminary appraisal, there will be an effort made here to address in some detail the

<sup>204</sup> J. Barthoux, *Les Fouilles de Haḍḍa, stupas et sites*, 2 vols., Paris, 1933, p. 2. This book has also been translated into English (following the same pagination): *The Hadda Excavations*, translated by N. M. Fatemi and A. Azodi, ed. by Bruce Miller, Bangkok, 2001.

<sup>205</sup> For translation of Hui-lan's biography (including his studies at Chi-pin) see Chapter 1.II.D. For translation of Chih-meng's travels to Chi-pin, see Rhie (2001), pp. 128-130.

<sup>206</sup> Often called the Cave of the Buddha's Shadow, see Vol. II for fuller discussion and translations.

<sup>207</sup> For the Chi-pin territory in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, see S. Kuwayama, "Pilgrimage Route changes and the Decline of Gandhāra," in Brancaccio and Behrendt (2006), pp. 107-134, and Li Ch'ung-feng, "The Geography of Transmission: The 'Jibin' Route and the Propagation of Buddhism in China," in Kizil, *On the Silk Road: Crossroads of Commerce and Meeting of Minds*, ed. by R. Ghose, Mumbai, 2008, pp. 25-31.

issues particularly relevant to early Chinese Buddhist art. In doing so, there emerge some potentially important directions for further research.

### A. Great Stupa (TTK)

The so-called Great Stupa (Top-e-Kalān or Tope Kelān) is the only large stupa in Haḍḍa. It is clearly visible in its dramatic landscape setting on a wide portion of the plateau near the village of Haḍḍa (Fig. 8.29a). The Great Stupa has been known to the West since its first excavation by Charles Masson in 1834 (reported in 1841),<sup>208</sup> who made careful drawings of the stupa (by then already missing its stone casing) and who also discovered the relic deposit within. The relic deposit included 200 coins with examples of 14 Hepthalite coins and Sassanian coins of Sharpur I (241-273), Varhran IV (388-399), Varhran V (420-438), Yazdagird II (438-457), and Peroz (459-484), as well as others of around the mid to late fifth century.<sup>209</sup> This site was re-excavated by Tarzi in the two seasons of 1978 and 1978/79, who designated this site as Tapa-e-Top-e-Kalān (TTK) in order to distinguish it from the nearby site of Tapa Kalān excavated by Barthoux in 1926-27. Barthoux did not excavate the Great Stupa site since it had been done by Masson in 1834 and later by Foucher and Goddard in 1923.<sup>210</sup> The Great Stupa site (TTK) is located between Haḍḍa village and the sites of Barthoux's Tapa-i-Kafarihā and Tapa Kalān (Fig. 8.28).

Tapa-e-Top-e-Kalān (TTK) is an impressive monastic site, including a large square stupa court (P1) with seven radiating chapels (shrines), each containing a stupa. Alternating with the chapels on three sides of the stupa court are eight large image niches (Fig. 8.29b). Pillars supported the roof of a portico around the entire stupa court. The Great Stupa itself faces northeast with a flight of stairs. The northeast wall of the stupa court contains both the entrance to the adjacent monastery vihāra (P2) and the narrow, independent entrance to the stupa court (P1) near the eastern corner (Fig. 8.29b). Attached to the vihāra was also another unit (P3), not yet completely excavated. Tarzi mentions the possible existence of a large Parinirvāṇa image at the site, but it has not yet been discovered.<sup>211</sup>

Figs. 8.29a and c show the clearly layered structure of the Great Stupa and the three cuttings made by Charles Masson in 1834 when he was searching for the relics. Tarzi dug around the podium (base) of the stupa (GS on plan in Fig. 8.29b) near the step-back of the staircase and at the western corner. He uncovered from the podium around the steps some *in situ* pilasters and sculptures (Figs. 8.29d, e). The pilaster shows the "basket of leaves" capital with "flattened volutes," one of the many typical kinds of capitals encountered in the remains of Haḍḍa.<sup>212</sup> The sculptures reveal a style full of rhythmic vigor in postures and drapery. The long torso of Fig. 8.29e has a smoothly modeled muscular shape that is more

<sup>208</sup> Charles Masson, "Mémorial on the Topes and Sepulchral Monuments of Afghanistan", in H. H. Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, London, 1841.

<sup>209</sup> E. Errington, "Rediscovering the Collections of Charles Masson", in M. Alam and D. Klimburg-Salter, eds., *Coins, Art, and Chronology*, Vienna, 1999, p. 215.

<sup>210</sup> The Great Stupa site was partially excavated by Charles Masson in 1834 (altogether he found four sites and obtained the reliquaries). In autumn of 1879 the expedition under Sir Louis Cavagnair was at the site and W. Simpson, who accompanied this expedition took some fragments of statues and stone sculpture to the British Museum. In March of 1923 Alfred Foucher and A. Goddard were in Jellalabad and did more work of uncovering the Great Stupa site. By the winter of 1926-27 they had entirely excavated the site. Barthoux (1933), pp. 11-12.

<sup>211</sup> Tarzi (1990), p.722. According to information given by Jussa Shafiq, the last Prime Minister of the Afghanistan Kingdom in 1978, there should be a large Parinirvāṇa image in a "big corridor". He remembered from his youth when he was attending a school in Haḍḍa that he and his friends played "in the hand of the big laying figure."

<sup>212</sup> See Barthoux's study of the pilaster and capital types in Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 18-41.



curvilinearly fashioned than the tighter and more statically sectioned torso style of the earlier phases of Gandhāra sculptures in general. Similarly, the shape of the scarf ends on the standing Bodhisattva (?) figure next to the pilaster in Fig. 8.29d relates to the hem shapes and dramatic outward flair of the scarf as seen in the painted standing Bodhisattvas of Cave GK 21 at Kumtura in Kucha, which was discussed and dated in Vol. II as 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>213</sup> It seems likely that these images date to around the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, as would be indicated by the coins in the relic deposit of the Great Stupa.

Two of the radiating stupa chapels were excavated by Tarzi (CH I and CH V), both of which had surviving remains up to the third or fourth level (Figs. 8.29c, f). From these it seems clear that the seven chapels were planned and built according to a unified plan at approximately the same time.<sup>214</sup> These seven stupas may refer to the seven Buddhas, probably laid out in circumambulatory order (either starting from Vipāśyin or from Śākyamuni). The plan of alternating seven chapels with eight niches which contained “clay figures”<sup>215</sup> suggests two possible iconographic schemes: the eight great events of the Buddha’s life (which was codified by the 5<sup>th</sup> century), or the seven Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva. Though it is not yet possible to verify these suggestions, perhaps with further research and excavation, it will be possible to find further clues that would point to a conclusion.

The base of chapel CH I shows six pilasters making five bays (Fig. 8.29f). Possibly there may have been five Buddhas on each side of the base, but this is not confirmed. The second level (apparently square) shows three trilobed niches, each supported by a pilaster which has a double form with the topmost part extending up between the trilobed arches. The third level has a multi-faceted polygonal shape with short pilasters and possibly with 10 (or 12) niches (unreported). These are important remains that probably date around the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and can serve to help structure the chronology of the Haḍḍa site. Tarzi indicates, though does not detail, that colossal standing Buddhas adorned the “bench” (platform) around the perimeter of Chapel CH I of which the head in Fig. 8.29g is an example. It, too, likely dates around the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The head shows small, tight clusters of wavy hair covering the cranium and uṣṇīṣa, a peak shaped hairline that emphasizes the broad curves of the meeting of the forehead and hair, a pronounced raised ridge for the sweeping arch of the semi-circular eyebrows that descend far into the nose bridge, a large eye socket with heavy upper eyelid, a pronounced lower lip (that is like the heads of mid-5<sup>th</sup> century Mathurā Gupta stone sculptures), and a firmly set mouth. The face structure and chin are solid and compactly molded with a sense of toughness that imparts a relatively strong, clearly shaped and patterned structure. It represents a bold reality. This head may have some resemblances with the head of the West Great Buddha of Bāmiyān (such as seen in the lower lip and jaw formation), which I will discuss in Vol. IV as probably dating ca. late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>216</sup> It is certainly a more emphatically linear style and massive head with taut planes than seen in the clay Buddha head from Shotorak from Niche D3 near Stupa D3 (Fig. 8.40e), discussed below as possibly dating around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.

Because of finding ample evidence of burning of this site of the Great Stupa, Tarzi credits the final demise of this site, and also of all the other sites at Haḍḍa, to iconoclastic destruction in a period between ca. mid 8<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of the Gahzavid dynasty.<sup>217</sup> Certainly when Fa-hsien visited

<sup>213</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 714-715, figs. 4.85b, c.

<sup>214</sup> Noted by Tarzi (1990), p. 718.

<sup>215</sup> Tarzi (1990), p. 718

<sup>216</sup> I presented a preliminary study of this issue in a recent article: M. Rhie “Aspects of the Two Colossal Buddhas at Bāmiyān,” in *Xuanzang and the Silk Route*, ed. by L. Chandra and R. Banerjee, Delhi, 2008, pp. 1-31.

<sup>217</sup> Tarzi (1990), pp. 723-726.



in 402 A.D., the site was already flourishing and when Hsüan-tsang visited ca. 632 A.D. it was largely in decay. Tarzi suggests that the monuments of Haḍḍa which Hsüan-tsang saw in decay continued to be repaired and restored and even large areas of new buildings occurred. He cites the comments of Wu-k'ung of ca. 753, who found the region flourishing. "Between this date and the accession to the throne of the Ghaznavids, the end took place not only of Haḍḍa, but of all the Buddhist monasteries of the region devastated by the hordes of iconoclasts and incendiaries ..." <sup>218</sup> It is becoming apparent that there may not have been much destruction, if any, with the advent of the Hephthalites in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

### B. *Tapa Kalān*

Tapa Kalān is a large monastery site southeast of the Great Stupa site (TTK) (Fig. 8.28). Two large chambers each containing a stupa (2.85 m on a side) flank the main entrance to the court of the main stupa (TK68), measuring 23.4 m and facing east (Fig. 8.30a). The main stupa is surrounded by a double row of smaller stupas of varying sizes, several of which are of interest here. According to Barthoux, many small sculptures were found around the main stupa, presumably originally decorating the stupa.<sup>219</sup> Here and there around the inner walls of the court were some monumental Buddha statues. Other structures were made adjoining the main stupa court along the outer walls on the west and south (TK112-129) (Fig. 8.30a). On the north there is a zone of chambers with stupas, and further north a group of stupas TK1-4. Inside TK1 was found embedded an early stupa (TK1a) with square base, circular drum, hemispherical dome and simple moldings. This suggests a relatively early existence of the Buddhist site.<sup>220</sup> TK3, composed of slabs of schist like TK1, had five classical columns in the base. According to Barthoux, the spaces between the columns once had paintings.<sup>221</sup> A series of niches (TK4-11) within the enclosure showed interesting remains of sculptures, most having an approximately life-size dhyānāsana Buddha. The center niche (TK8) had a large Buddha seated in bhadṛāsana with a standing Buddha at his left and apparently a Bodhisattva Maitreya (at his right?). Two large stupas were added at the western corner (TK141) and in the south (TK140), both adjacent to the main stupa court.<sup>222</sup>

#### 1. *Stupa TK67*

The small stupa TK67 on the west side of the main stupa (Fig. 8.30a), measuring 2.7m on each side, has a base with the bust of a lion with crossed paws at each corner (Fig. 8.30b). On the lowest level there are no pilasters or other indication of a niche, but there is a row of five Buddhas in dhyānāsana on each side.<sup>223</sup> Each Buddha has a single, circular mandorla (Fig. 8.30b). A circular mandorla (but with head halo as well) is known from the Lou-lan site wooden lintel of seated Buddhas dating ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.20) and in the Kara-tepe wall paintings of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>224</sup> Such indications

<sup>218</sup> Tarzi (1990), p. 723.

<sup>219</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001) pp. 88-89. (Eng. trans: "this stupa must have been covered, especially on its western facade, with curious high reliefs, for in its neighbourhood, a large number of statuettes and figures were dug out, especially our demons.").

<sup>220</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), fig. 44.

<sup>221</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 71 and fig. 46.

<sup>222</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 67-73.

<sup>223</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 88.

<sup>224</sup> Rhie (1999), fig.3.13a.

suggest a possible dating for this stupa around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century. This configuration of five dhyānāsana Buddhas resembles that of the Group 16 five Buddhas in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (Figs. 4.25, 4.38).

## 2. *Stupa TK86*

Stupa TK86 is a small square stupa measuring 1.55 m on each side located on the south side of the main stupa (Figs. 8.30a, c). Like Stupa TK67, it is in the row close to the main stupa and is presumably one of the earlier subsidiary stupas. The base moldings are unadorned and are grooved the entire length while the corners are rounded off. Most of the stupa is ruined, but there remains a high first level with the facade as seen in the drawing in Fig. 8.30c showing five Buddhas who stand (“walking Buddhas” in Barthoux’s term) on the top edge of the base molding.<sup>225</sup> They are without any halo (perhaps just missing) or pedestal and there are no pilasters or niches. However, there is a variety of gestures among those with remaining upper body, and the full sling or half sling (see Fig. 4.15 a) and b)) manner of wearing the outer robe appears in two of them, the one at the end holding the edge of the hem as the right hand is raised to the chest. This manner was observed in two of the seated Buddha in the medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid (Fig. 8.26b) and can be seen in the standing stone Buddhas of the platform base in shrine “c” in court XIVii at Takht-i-Bāhī probably dating ca. 250-350 (Fig. 8.22b).

## 3. *Stupas TK97 and TK100*

Both Stupas TK97 and TK100 are situated on the second or outer row of stupas on the south side of the main stupa (Fig. 8.30a) and are presumably later than Stupas TK67 and 86 discussed above. Both are small, square base stupas (TK97 measures 1.3 m on each side and TK100 measures 1.85 m ), and in both only the base level has survived. Each has three short corinthian pilasters forming two bay-niches. According to Barthoux, this is the arrangement on each side of Stupa TK97, but on Stupa TK100 he notes that “The back lateral sides have only one” (perhaps meaning only one Buddha or one niche, but it is not clear).<sup>226</sup> On both stupas, between the pilasters are a group of three dhyānāsana Buddhas at the right (facing) and a group of two dhyānāsana Buddhas at the left, apparently all without halo or pedestal (Figs. 8.30d, e). Barthoux remarks that the Buddhas in the three-image bay of Stupa TK97 seem to have had their knees cut in order to fit the three statues into the space, but that is not the case with Stupa TK100 where the images have ample space.

These two small stupas are particularly interesting for showing the grouping of 3 + 2 dhyānāsana Buddhas (on all four sides with Stupa TK97, and at least on the northern side with TK100). This can be one way of presenting the five Buddhas, similar to what is seen in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 23 five Buddhas (Figs. 5.30a, b). In such a case, the grouping could reflect the first three Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa) with the group of two Buddhas representing the subsequent two Buddhas, Śākyamuni and Maitreya. Such an arrangement was discussed above in this chapter, section II.C.2.a.ii in connection with the west and north sides of Jauliāñ Stupa A15, whose sculptures around the base, believed to have been added later than the original stupa, were dated in the study above to around the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Further, it can be noted that the “W” shaped

<sup>225</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 93.

<sup>226</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 96.

creases in the flap over the legs of the Buddhas in TK97 are similar to that motif in one of the Buddhas on the east side of Jauliān Stupa A15 (Fig. 8.11b), suggesting that these images may date around the same time. With regard to the 3 + 2 grouping, both Stupas TK97 and TK100 present the images in the same way, and it is of note that such a reading would also suit the direction of circumambulation of the stupa in both cases.

These four examples offer some interesting cases of groups of five Buddhas seen in some of the small stupas around the main stupa (TK68) of Tapa Kalān. They may represent a rather early or experimental grouping for the five. However, as with all the remains of Haḍḍa, the lack of photo documentation and fully detailed description hampers a full understanding or ability to make any remarks other than there appear to have been groups of five within the figural combinations of the small stupas at Tapa Kalān, one of the major monasteries of Haḍḍa. The connections with two of the groups of five Buddhas in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu is, however, noteworthy.

### C. *Tapa-i-Kafarihā*

Tapa-i-Kafarihā is about 300m west from Tapa Kalān (Fig. 8.28). It is a rather complex site and had, at the time of Barthoux's excavations, quite a number of remaining images in the shrines, some of interesting layout. Beside the main large stupa K1, there are three relatively large stupas to the north just outside the main stupa court: K35, K37 and K43 (Fig. 8.31a). All have a large platform terrace on which is placed the stupa (towards the rear of the platform). The stupa has its own stairway up to the stupa's second level. This kind of plan is similar to that noted for Stupa No. 6 at Ali Masjid (Fig. 8.26a), which was tentatively dated above to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of Stupa K43, the best preserved of the three, a pair of square, smaller stupas flank the stairs to the second level.<sup>227</sup> A pair of smaller stupas flanking the staircase is also known at Mohrā Morādu main stupa site (one is ruined) and also at the Jauliān main stupa, among others. It appears to be a standard plan by around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in both the Taxila and Peshāwar areas as well as at Haḍḍa.

#### 1. *Stupa K43*

For Stupa K43 the large platform base measures 6.10 m x 4.25 m. Its staircase (of three steps) is oriented towards the west (Figs. 8.31a, b). The two longer facades of the platform base have nine pilasters with eight Buddhas seated dhyānāsana. On the shorter, rear side there are six pilasters and five dhyānāsana Buddhas. We do not know if there were any images on the front wall flanking the staircase, but it is likely. All the examples shown in Fig. 8.31b have a head halo in relief and sit directly on the floor of the bay between the corinthian style pilasters.<sup>228</sup> The architrave has double vertical lines drawn in ochre color, simulating dentils.<sup>229</sup> Set towards the rear of the platform is the square base of the stupa (3.55m on each side), which also has its own staircase (six steps that are wider than the steps of the platform access). There are five bays of niches on each side (except the east with the staircase) all separated by pilasters. In each niche is a dhyānāsana Buddha under a pointed arch and seated on a raised rectangular seat which fills the entire bay. The arch rim of the niche has a relatively wide front surface which is

<sup>227</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 135-136.

<sup>228</sup> Barthoux discusses the usage of stone (what he calls "freestone") in the construction of niches and pilasters. See Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 45-51 and fig. 38 for a model of the type used in the case of K43, which Barthoux notes is unusual.

<sup>229</sup> Barthoux (1933) and (2001), pp. 135-136.

marked by incised lines, possibly also simulating dentils. Here the five Buddhas are probably repeated three times around the stupa, as we have seen in other examples, such as the main stupa at Jauliān.

An example of a niche with stucco sculptures possibly from the site of Tapa-i-Kafarihā is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 8.31c).<sup>230</sup> Though the iconography of this niche is not clear (Behrendt suggests it is “seated Bodhisattva Śākyamuni”), it could represent Siddhārtha’s meditation under the rose apple tree at the plowing festival, here possibly showing the king paying homage to his son.<sup>231</sup> Stylistically, the figure is more muscularly powerful and detailed than the male torso from the Great Stupa (TTK) site in Fig. 8.30f which, as noted above probably dates in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century or later. The niche rim is an abbreviated form probably derived from the earlier stone prototypes, such as seen in the niche of marl limestone from Fayaz-tepe, near Termez in the Bactrian region dating to ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century or earlier (Fig. 5.6).<sup>232</sup> This stucco image could possibly date to the 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. Gallery K45

Gallery K45 located to the north beyond Stupa K43 is a fascinating structure: a long, narrow gallery filled on each side with image niches and images on projecting platforms (Fig. 8.31a). The iconography is difficult to decipher, but there seems to be a series of large standing Buddhas on the north wall which alternate with recessed niches. The configuration may have some connection with repetitive sets of Buddhas, such as the seven Buddhas (four colossal standing images on platforms plus the three recessed niches), but this is not certain. The images on the southern wall include what appears to be sets of seven Buddhas, but also includes several groups of two Buddhas, some of which are back-to-back and some are backed up against a stone pillar.<sup>233</sup> The set of two Buddhas could refer to Śākyamuni and Maitreya.

There are also three stupas in the gallery, including a major, very elaborate one at the east end of the gallery (Stupa K45) (Fig. 8.31a) that features large images of ethnic donors flanking a major Buddha image on each side of the lowest level. The large pilasters that separate each image have elaborate corinthian capitals with a small Buddha in the leaves.<sup>234</sup> This gallery would have presented an impressive assortment of large stucco images and stupas.

Tapa Kafarihā could have been very important for the study of relatively complex images niches and colossal images, but it is difficult to come to conclusions based solely on the drawings. Nevertheless, it is apparent that this site, like the others at Haḍḍa, was extremely active in the production of chambers, niches, galleries and stupas, all lavishly adorned with images. These could naturally have been a vital source not only for understanding the Buddhism of that area, but also probably as a site exporting art forms and iconographic models to other sites, particularly to Central Asia and China.

<sup>230</sup> Kurt Behrendt suggests that this niche is “possibly from Hadda site of Tapa-i-Kafarihā, stupa K43, ca. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.” K. Behrendt, *The Art of Gandhāra in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New Haven and London, 2007, fig. 68. Though this niche stylistically resembles the drawings in Barthoux (1933 and 2001), fig. 113 on p. 135, there is no mention by Barthoux of such an icon among the group, and the drawing does not show a Bodhisattva type figure.

<sup>231</sup> If this Metropolitan Museum niche were part of the Stupa 43 set, it could represent Śākyamuni among the five Buddhas. Possibly it could be Siddhārtha’s first meditation and in that matter could be likened to the usage of an ascetic Buddha to represent Śākyamuni, as seen in medium-size stupa at Ali Masjid (Fig. 8.26b) and in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 20 (Figs. 5.57a, b).

<sup>232</sup> For details concerning the dating, see Rhie (1999), pp. 194-195.

<sup>233</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 136-139.

<sup>234</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 139-140.

D. *Bāgh-Gai*

Bāgh-Gai is about 1.5 km to the southwest of Tapa Kalān (Fig. 8.28). It is dominated by two contiguous enclosed areas: the court of the main stupa B12 in the southeast (Figs. 8.32a, b) and the adjacent attached monastery of about the same dimensions to the northwest (Fig. 8.32a). Interestingly, the complex has a sturdy outer wall that encompasses both the monastery and the main stupa court. The outer walls have surviving circular and semicircular tower structures similar to those known from ancient Roman fortresses in the middle east (and also seen in the monastery at Shotorak).

The main stupa, Stupa B12, is 11.75m x 2.90m with its access staircase facing southeast. The stupa sits on a massive platform, which, along with the level above (the base of the stupa proper) still retained some of the decor and niches at the time of Barthoux's excavation (Figs. 8.32b, c). There are two smaller stupas flanking each side of the staircase (a total of four), a typical arrangement among some of the large Haḍḍa stupas. This would appear to be a later extension of the plan known in Taxila with only one small stupa on each side of the main stupa's staircase, such as at Mohrā Morādu. The main stupa at Jauliān also has smaller stupas on each side of staircase, but the layout is somewhat complicated (Fig. 8.4). At Bāgh Gai, Fig. 8.32c shows part of one of the two subsidiary stupas, namely B11, which has remaining niches (seemingly 3 on each side, like Stupa B7) in the lower level with a row of standing Buddhas attended by two much smaller standing monks or Buddhas in a trefoil arched niche supported by short corinthian pilasters that in turn support a corinthian column above. This niche and pilaster style is rich and heavy in appearance. The standing Buddhas are sturdy and have one leg with a bent knee, though the overall impression is a little solid and stiff. Two of the main standing Buddhas and all of the small attendant images in each of the three niches seen in Fig. 8.32c have a full sling mode with the right hand raised up to the chest and holding the edge of the saṅghāṭi as it crosses the chest. The style of these images would appear to pre-date those of Tapa-e-Top-e Kalān (TTK) of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century as seen in Figs. 8.29d and e, perhaps ca. first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The base of B11 is square, but the level above appears to have been circular.

The exterior of the large Stupa B12 is constructed with slabs of schist ("dalles de schists"), and not with the freestones ("pierres de taille") as used at Tapa Kalān.<sup>235</sup> On the large podium the lowest level has, according to Barthoux, 16 short corinthian pilasters on each side (Barthoux notes that this continued on the front side (staircase side) as well, but he does not mention the number of niches on the front). These pilasters define the 16 bays (not all of uniform size) which have a relatively complex alternating arrangement of niches: trabeated niches alternate with bays without a niche, which in turn alternate with trefoil arched niches (Fig. 8.32d). A dhyānāsana Buddha sits in each bay-niche on an oval cushion-like seat, and those in the trabeated and trefoil niches sit on a low flat slab or on a higher square pedestal. It seems that there were no attendants either inside or outside of the niches or in the bays. What is particularly interesting in this arrangement is the wide variety created by the alternating types of niches, including bays with only an image seated on a oval seat without a niche. This arrangement imparts individuality to the images and at the same time also allows a prominence to those which do not have a niche by virtue of the concomitantly large size of the Buddha image. This would appear to be a later development compared with the more regular patterns of alternation of trabeated and trefoil niches as seen in Taxila Dharmarājikā Stupa, which is probably one of the earliest examples in a large stupa of usage of the pattern of alternating trabeated and trefoil arches (Fig. 8.3a). It is also

<sup>235</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 150.

possible that some of these niches and images were repaired, so it is difficult to be certain about the configurations. A view of one trabeated niche on the platform base of B12 appears at the far left in Fig. 8.32c.

In the case of the platform images of Stupa B12, it is possible that the usage of the niche type could help define the iconography, that is, those in trabeated niches would be one system, those in trefoil niches another system, and those in the bay-niches a third system, perhaps all operating simultaneously in some manner around the whole perimeter.

Only two large niches remain on the northeastern side above the molded base of the stupa proper: one trabeated (trapezoidal) and one trefoil (Fig. 8.32d). This remaining portion of the stupa proper is 4.50m in height, or 3 times the height of the platform (podium). The trabeated niche has a seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā on a draped throne attended by a male in a long tunic and female figure also in a long tunic. The trilobed niche has a single dhyānāsana Buddha. Below each of the main Buddhas there are three small seated Buddhas;<sup>236</sup> two are in dhyāna mudrā, but the central one at the base of the trabeated niche has the dharmachakra mudrā and the central one in the base of the trefoil niche has the right hand raised to the chest. These might refer to the Buddhas of the Three Times, with the central one being especially distinguished by the mudrā. Presumably there was an alternating series of similar trabeated and trefoil niches around the large stupa at this level.

### 1. *Stupa B31*

Stupa B31 is a small, isolated stupa at the northeast corner of the main stupa court (Fig. 8.32a). According to Barthoux, it is similar in structure to Stupas B10-B14 (Figs. 8.32a and c) and was originally placed in a room, two of whose walls have disappeared.<sup>237</sup> On each side of the square base of B31 there are three trefoil arched niches separated by the double-storied corinthian pilaster-and-column ensemble (square below, round above). The general appearance would be rather heavy, as seen in B11 in Fig. 8.32c. All sides except the southeast (Fig. 8.32e) have a standing Buddha flanked by two “similar but smaller ones”.<sup>238</sup> The drawing of the southeast facade in Fig. 8.32e shows a single standing Buddha (with right arm hanging down and covered by his robe) in the central niche and a dhyānāsana Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal in the two outer niches. If each side is considered a separate iconography, then the three-Buddhas are repeated four times (possibly the Buddhas of the Three Times shown in each of the four directions). However, it is not clear why the southeast wall, which shows one standing Buddha and two seated dhyānāsana Buddhas, is different from the three standing Buddhas of the other sides. Possibly it indicates either the beginning or the end of the circumambulation course.

It is interesting to note the usage of the lotus seat with one row of down-turned petals. Also, a kneeling figure appears in the outermost two upper corners (Fig. 8.32e). Kneeling figures above the Buddha niche occur in Stupas D1 and D4 at Jauliāñ, probably dating ca. 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Figs. 8.16c, d, f and 8.17b, d). A wavy design decorates the lintel on the southeast side (there are other designs on the other sides) and the cornice brackets have a variety of decorative designs: metatopes (as seen on Greek temples such as the Parthenon), simple pillars, palmette leaf, and a facing pair of flying doves. Above the large, plain cornice is the molded base of the second level, which appears to be circular with

<sup>236</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 150.

<sup>237</sup> It may have been in a room similar to those of B29 and B30, both of which contained a single stupa. Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 158.

<sup>238</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 158.



alternating short corinthian pilasters and trabeated (trapezoidal) niches in which a dhyānāsana Buddha, each with a circular head halo, sits directly on the floor of the simply portrayed trabeated niche (without an individual lintel above). There are ten trabeated niches,<sup>239</sup> which would likely comprise an example of Buddhas of the ten directions.<sup>240</sup> Such a configuration would appear to clearly imply the Mahāyāna concept expressed in many early Mahāyāna sutras of the Buddhas of the ten directions. The lotus pedestal is a relatively early form, that is, with a flat pointed tip and central incised line. It is a type seen in the terracotta Buddhas from the Great Stupa at Devnimori of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>241</sup> and in China in examples of bronze images dating from ca. 420's–430's, including an image dated to 423.<sup>242</sup> The form with only a central incised line in each petal (as we see in B31) may be slightly earlier than those with both a central incised line and an added contour line. The design elements could tentatively suggest a date for Stupa B31 around late 4<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps one of the special early stupas of the main stupa court.

## 2. Stupa B51

Stupa B51 is a particularly important example for our current study. It is located in a group of detached structures outside of the main monastery compound to the northeast (Fig. 8.32a). This stupa is, according to Barthoux, one of the best preserved at Bāgh-Gai, possibly because it was protected by two enclosing structures. The stupa was the main object of worship within two concentric square structures which also provided two circumambulatory passages around the central stupa (Fig. 8.33a). This is then a single stupa within its own shrine, with two protective structures, all square in plan.<sup>243</sup> A similar, though more elaborate structure with rectangular plan appears with Stupa B55, discussed below (Fig. 8.32a).

Though the outermost structure surrounding Stupa B51 was damaged on the southwestern (entrance) side (Fig. 8.33a), the inner structure as well as the square stupa both retained their full square shape. The stupa itself is remarkably well preserved in the lower portion, though the top portion is ruined. There appears to have been a “basement” projecting out from under the base molding of the podium, somewhat similar to that seen in Stupa P37 at Takht-i-Bāhī (Fig. 8.23a) and on Stupa A2 at Jauliān (Fig. 8.13a). According to Barthoux, all four sides of the first level (podium) were quite well preserved, and only the “southeast” corner was damaged.<sup>244</sup> However, the designation of directions used in Barthoux's text is hard to decipher in relation to the plan, which shows that “southeast” is a side (not a corner), so it is difficult to say which corner Barthoux is referring to. It is probably the corner between Wall C and Wall D as indicated in my additions to the plan in Fig. 8.33a.

<sup>239</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 158.

<sup>240</sup> This stupa contrasts with the Stupa B30, which is circular on all levels, has 12 divisions on the three stories that survive, and has no images; Barthoux (1933 and 2001) pp. 156–157. Stupa B30 may be an earlier stupa than both B29 (of which only the lowest level survives and only shows a single seated dhyānāsana Buddha without niche, halo or pedestal between the widely spaced corinthian pilasters (*Ibid.*, p. 155) and B31, which is the most elaborate of the three and may represent the latest in terms of style and iconography among them. That is, there seems to be a chronological and iconographic sequence from Stupa B30 to Stupa B29 to Stupa B31, and the design goes from circular on all stories each with 12 divisions (without images, or, if painted, then possibly with images of the 12 zodiac figures) in Stupa B30, to square base with small Buddha image in each space between the short corinthian pilaster (rest destroyed) in Stupa B29, to the square base with three Buddha niches and a circular second level with ten seated dhyānāsana Buddhas in trabeated niches.

<sup>241</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.91a.

<sup>242</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.82c, d.

<sup>243</sup> We can see circular stupa shrines at Miran, Swat and Amarāvati, see Rhie (1999), figs. 5.14, 5.18, 5.15, 5.15b.

<sup>244</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 159.

Each corner has a large corinthian pilaster between which is a row of standing (“walking” in Barthoux’s descriptive term) images. Interestingly, the number of images varies among the walls as described by Barthoux. On the southwest wall (Wall A), the wall facing the entrance and the big main stupa B12 in the monastery compound, there are five sculptured figures (Fig. 8.33b). All are Buddhas except for one Bodhisattva in the center (erroneously drawn in Fig. 8.33b with a Buddha head). The northwest side (Wall B in Fig. 8.33a) has four figures. The northeast side (Wall C) has three figures. The southeast side (Wall D) is partly ruined and has only one remaining Buddha. Barthoux mentions that each figure has a circular head halo which had remains of red color outlining the halo.<sup>245</sup>

From this description and the drawing in Fig. 8.33b, it appears that the old photograph in Fig. 8.33c is of Stupa B51 showing the southwest side (right) with five standing figures (four Buddhas and the central figure a standing Bodhisattva) of Wall A, and at the left is the row of four standing Buddhas on the northwest side (Wall B). This photo thus shows the west corner with a view of the southwest side (right, Wall A) and the northwest side (left, Wall B). It is one of the rare cases where we can identify a photograph as a particular site among the Haḍḍa ruins. From this photo we can see that all the heads of the images are missing.

This stupa presents quite an extraordinary arrangement that would seem to suggest a different iconographic set on each side (if added together, there appears to be no particular meaningful number, though the number of images is unknown for the southeast side). Taken in the order of circumambulation beginning with the front, the scheme is:

Wall A (southwest, facing the entrance): four Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva

Wall B (northwest): four Buddhas

Wall C (northeast): three Buddhas

Wall D (southeast): ruined, with one surviving Buddha

It is virtually assured that Wall A presents the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. The presence of Maitreya Bodhisattva makes an even clearer identity of the five. This is a similar configuration as seen in the Group 12 wall painting in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 in Fig. 7.41, the latest of the four different groups of five Buddhas in Cave 169 dating ca. 425, and which also shows four Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva. Stupa B51 also interestingly indicates an inclusion of various sets of multiple Buddhas on one edifice, probably each being a discrete set rather than an additive totality. One possible interpretation is that Wall B shows the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa with Wall C being the first three Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, or the last three (Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya), in which case the latter is also the Buddhas of the Three Times. It is difficult to postulate concerning Wall D, but if it were originally two images (as might be surmised, given the sequencing of images on this stupa), then they might be Śākyamuni and Maitreya. However, there is another possible identification based on a more Hinayāna interpretation. For example, a verse associated with a number of the commentaries of the Buddhavaṃsa has the following:

“One Buddha in a Sāra-eon, in a Maṇḍa-eon the Conquerors are two,  
In a Vara-eon three Buddhas, in a Sāramaṇḍa-eon four Buddhas,  
Five Buddhas in a Bhadda-eon; there are no more Conquerors than that.”<sup>246</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 159.

<sup>246</sup> I.B. Horner (trans.), *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning (Madhurattavilāsini), Commentary on the Chronicle of Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa) by Buddhaddatta Thera*, The Pali Text Society, 1978, p. x.

If read in circumambulatory order, the front face of the lower level of the B51 stupa would be presenting the five Buddhas of the Bhadda-eon (Bhadrakalpa), followed by the four Buddhas of the Sāramaṇḍa-eon, then the three Buddhas of the Vara-eon. The last side, which is now ruined may possibly have been the two Buddhas of the Maṇḍa-eon. In either interpretation, certainly the five Buddhas represent the Bhadrakalpa, but whether this stupa reflects the commentarial literature of the Pali canon or the Mahāyāna Bhadrakalpa texts is still difficult to determine.

The date of the B51 stupa is not specifically known, but judging from several factors, it probably dates from the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Stylistically, the images show tightly clinging garments with the right arm in the full sling mode and the left arm lowered and holding an edge of the garment. Most appear to stand in a tribhaṅga posture. None have surviving heads, so the drawing in of the heads in Fig. 8.33b is conjecture (and the head of the central figure should be shown as a Bodhisattva). Interestingly, the design of the lotus petal on the architrave shows the style of a rounded top petal with a line near the edge and an incised vertical line in the center (Fig. 8.33b). As noted above with Stupa B31, the petals of the Buddha's pedestal in Stupa B31 only have the central incised line (like the Devnimori example of ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century). The petal with the added line around the contour appears in Chinese bronze images around the 420's-430's, and is seen in the gilt bronze bhadrāsana Buddha dated 423.<sup>247</sup> These examples can help to suggest a relative dating of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century for B31 and ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century for Stupa B51.

The B51 stupa is of critical importance for our study of the five Buddhas. So far it is the only case I have found in Taxila, Gandhāra and Haḍḍa with the group of five clearly having Maitreya in the central position, even though Maitreya is the last of the five in chronological terms. This means that the row of five does not necessarily have to conform to the chronological sequence. In the specific case of B51 we know Maitreya is the central image, but then what are the identities of the other four? This will be difficult to determine without other factors or evidence, because given that Maitreya occupies the central position there would be then exactly 24 possible arrangements (24 permutations) in the arrangement of the five images with keeping Maitreya in the center. Nevertheless, this B51 stupa presents evidence, along with the medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid and Stupas A15, D4 and D1 at Jauliāñ, that in the Haḍḍa, Gandhāra and Taxila regions there were differing ways of aligning the sets of multiple images. They provide reasonable evidence for determining that there were differing modes of representation for the sets of multiple images and that opens up possibilities of differing concepts of practice and of connections with differing texts and/or interpretation of texts by around the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Structure B56 and Stupa B55

Structure B56 is a shrine for containing Stupa B55 (Figs. 8.32a and 8.34a). It is located to the north of B51, which is also a stupa shrine, but B56 is more elaborate in design. It was excavated by Barthoux, and some *in situ* photos taken at that time have recently been published.<sup>248</sup> These, together with the

<sup>247</sup> See Rhie (2002), figs. 2.82c, d. It also appears in the lotus petal of the pedestal of the standing Buddha in B3e at Shorchuk Ming-oi near Karashahr on the Northern route in Central Asia (*Ibid.*, fig. 5.21b), though these could have the modeled "double lobe" effect. See pp. 758-759 in Vol. II text for description and discussion, where the image is dated to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>248</sup> Pierre Cambon, "Haḍḍa no Buttō," (Reconsideration on Stupas of Haḍḍa—On Completion of the Reconstruction Project at the Guimet National Museum of Asiatic Arts, France), *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, No. 293, (July, 2007), pp. 79-105.

drawings in Barthoux help to understand the text, which lacks clarity.<sup>249</sup> The edifice B56 was clearly repaired, and had substantial damage well before the site was abandoned.<sup>250</sup> We will not probe into these problems here, but just note several of the features that are important for our current context. Using the plan in Fig. 8.34a published by Barthoux and Campon, a general understanding of the site can be obtained. Walls L and O at the front were later additions, as were walls M and N. The original structure started with the narrow entrance way into the main square room that contains Stupa B55, which only survived in the lowest level (Fig. 8.34b). Each side of the stupa had four relatively short pilasters each with a corinthian capital composed only of acanthus leaves, which would appear to be an early version.<sup>251</sup> The entablature was marked only with “modillions” (Greek metopes). Between each pilaster was a painting, apparently of a standing Buddha which had a head and body halo (Fig. 8.34b), three on each side. These possibly refer to the Buddhas of the Three Times in the four directions.<sup>252</sup>

Around the surrounding walls of the stupa chamber are Niches P and Q on the northwest wall, Niches R, S and T on the northeast wall, and Niches U, V and X on the southeastern wall (Fig. 8.34a). There is a pedestal for an image (lacking any image when Barthoux saw it) in the western corner. The total number of inset niches is eight and they contained images as follows according to Barthoux:

Niche P: dhyānāsana Buddha on square draped throne with “griffon paws”

Niche Q: standing Buddha, right hand covered and hanging down

Niche R: dhyānāsana Buddha (same as Niche P) (Fig. 8.34c)

Niche S: “walking” Buddha on each lateral wall of the niche (no mention of the back wall of the niche)

Niche T: dhyānāsana Buddha on pedestal flanked by two nāgas; two small “walking” Buddhas on the lateral walls of the niche

Niche U: large “walking Buddha” in abhayā mudrā on the back wall of the niche

Niche V: empty

Niche X: On back wall a large “walking” Buddha in abhayā mudrā (same as Buddha in Niche U)

These appear to show a scheme of alternating dhyānāsana and standing Buddhas. Though Niche V is lacking an image, the others all conform to such a scheme. If so, then Niche V may have been a dhyānāsana Buddha. It is possible that the scheme was representing the seven Buddhas with Maitreya (as a Buddha or Bodhisattva).

There are also niches around the outer walls of the shrine structure B56. These all appear on the second level, above the base level which has pilasters with empty bays (Fig. 8.34d). These niches are marked “a” (which is a long horizontal niche on the later extension of the building), “c”, “d” and “e” on the southeast wall, and Niches “g” and ? (unmarked) on the northeastern wall, according to the drawing of these walls in Fig. 8.34d. Images also appear on the wall areas (bays) between pilasters (not in recessed niches), that is, Bays “b”, “f”, “h” and “i” on the plan in Fig. 8.34d. Fig. 8.34e shows the stucco image remains of Bay “b” and Fig. 8.34f shows Niche “c”. Figs. 8.34g and h respectively show the left and right sides (facing) of Niche “d”. On the left wall of Niche “d” (facing) is a standing Buddha in full sling mode with the right hand clasping the hem on his chest and with the left arm lowered

<sup>249</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 160-166.

<sup>250</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 160-161.

<sup>251</sup> A drawing of this capital can be seen in Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 28, fig. d.

<sup>252</sup> Though it could be possible to refer to the twelve deeds of the Buddhas, those would more likely not be so abstractly portrayed by only a standing image.

with the hand holding the hem of the robe. At the Buddha's right is a monk (or donor), and to his left (actually on the back wall of the niche) is a standing female donor holding an object in front with both hands. All three are headless (Fig. 8.34g). The right side of the niche has a standing Bodhisattva (probably Maitreya) with the right hand raised palm inward against the bare chest and left hand holding a flask. To Maitreya's left is a standing monk in añjali mudrā. Both are headless (Fig. 8.34h). Though the main image of the back wall of Niche "d" is lost, it is likely to have been a Buddha, and this niche probably showed the Buddhas of the Three Times with Maitreya Bodhisattva clearly indicating the future.

These are beautifully fashioned stucco images and the Maitreya is particularly classic with rather simple lines and graceful movements. Both the degree of tribhaṅga and the fold patterns and scheme used may be associated with the stucco style seen for the images of the niches along the base of the main stupa at Mohṛā Morādu (Fig. 8.12f), which probably dates in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century (see discussion of Mohṛā Morādu above). Stylistically, these images would appear to have been made about the same time as those of Wall N in the front hall extension added to the original structure discussed below (Fig. 8.34a).

Other factors of note include the forms of the lotus pedestals, such as the lower part of the pedestal in Niche "e" with two rows of down-turned petals each with a medial incised line (see drawing in Fig. 8.34d-i). This style has been mentioned before as being similar to the lotus pedestals of some terracotta Buddhas from Devnimori, datable to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Also, the usage of the lotus pedestal in Bay "b" (also in the Bays "f", "h" and "i") with large pod rising from a semicircular unit of stamens and petals—a form seen in other Haḍḍa images and possibly representing a particular stage in the evolution of the pedestal forms in the Haḍḍa/Gandhāra region—can also be seen in examples from the Taxila area, such as at Jauliān in Stupa A15 (perhaps an early form) and on the main stupa at Mohṛā Morādu (Fig. 8.8b) and in individual shrines, such as Niche S7 at the entranceway to Mohṛā Morādu in Fig. 8.8j.

Further, it is especially interesting to observe that the two nude male figures at the front corners of the Buddha's pedestal on the back wall of Niche "c" (Fig. 8.34f) are closely akin to such figures as the nude Apollo that appears on the early Byzantine silver plate from the Sevso Treasure from Athens or Constantinople of ca. 400 A.D. (Fig. 8.34i).<sup>253</sup> The slender form with a smooth, muscular, tripartite division of the torso is very similar in each, as is the posture with one leg bent behind the other. It is quite possible that contemporaneous influences from Constantinople (and adjacent areas) could be influencing the figural art of the Haḍḍa region. It is certainly a subject for deeper pursuit and the parallels could help to form the outline of a chronology of the some Haḍḍa materials, which at present is a difficult task and as yet not adequately resolved.

Wall N on the extension of the front of Structure B56 shows two levels of arched niches, each containing a standing image (Fig. 8.35a), one of which is a Bodhisattva (second level, center), which is likely to have been Maitreya. This group of images presents superb examples of the Haḍḍa sculptural artistry. They appear to have been made at the time of enlargement of the structure, though there may have been several different stages in this enlargement and repair. Wall M has similar arched niches with standing Buddhas (Fig. 8.35b). These Buddha images as well as those of Wall N have some resemblance with sculptures from Nimogram in Swat, such as seen in the standing monk image in the "Departure" relief scene in Fig. 8.35c. Both have the rather similar physique with short torso and

<sup>253</sup> Alicia Walker, "Meaningful Mingling: Classicizing Imagery and Islamicizing Script in a Byzantine Bowl," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. XC, No.1, (March, 2008), pp. 32-53, Fig. 15 (private collection).

sturdy legs. This style can also probably be related to some of the stone standing Buddha sculptures from the Peshāwar area.

Though the main stupa B55 and the interior niches of this shrine B56 may have been relatively early (perhaps 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century), as the pilasters and the drawing in Fig. 8.34b indicate, the addition of Walls L, M, N, and O, though later, are not too much later, perhaps ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century. It would appear that this shrine was expanded around this time and the outside niches added at the same time.

#### 4. *Stupas B76 and B77*

At the western site of Bāgh-Gai (about 60m to the west from the main enclosure) there are the remains of an enclosure with a court (28 x 19 m) (Fig. 8.36a). At the southeast there is an elevation on which there is a small terrace with three stupas: B76, B77 and B78 (the latter ruined). B76 (2.2 m on each side) has four pilasters forming three bays, between each of which is a triad of stucco images (Fig. 8.36b). All three triads have a central seated dhyānāsana Buddha. The central triad has a Buddha seated on the flaring pod of a lotus with two smaller accompanying dhyānāsana Buddhas seated on a similar lotus pedestal. The lotus pedestal with flared pod is a type also seen on the outside of Structure B56 in Bays "f", "h" and "i" (Fig. 8.34d) and with other figures (mentioned above) as dating around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century or into the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This may be one possible indicator for the general date of this kind of lotus pedestal (which is also seen in the stone sculpture of Gandhāra and in some examples of stucco sculpture of Taxila, such as at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.8b).

The two outer triads on Stupa B76 have the central seated dhyānāsana Buddha seated on a trapezoidal throne (with sides slanting downward and inward) and flanked by two standing Buddhas (Fig. 8.36a).<sup>254</sup> These are three niches of three Buddhas, perhaps representing the Buddhas of the Three Times portrayed three times (in the Triple World) on each side (in each direction).

Stupa B77 is very similar to B76, though the central niche of the south wall, unlike that of Stupa B76, does not have the Buddhas seated on lotus pedestals, but rather on low rectangular pedestals (Fig. 8.36b).

These examples are interesting for the depiction of a triad of Buddhas (with the possibility of being the three Buddhas of Past, Present and Future portrayed in the Past, Present and Future and in the four directions), and for the simultaneous usage of the lotus pedestal as well as the rectangular and trapezoidal shaped pedestal.

The site of Bāgh Gai is notable for our present study for its depictions of the Three Buddhas in a variety of combinations, and also for the very interesting and important Stupa B51 which has the assortment of three, four and five images existing in the same stupa (one side is partly ruined). Most pertinent is the combination of five using four Buddhas with one Bodhisattva. This is the same combination as seen in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 12 and also in the five T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang in the 460's, though in both cases Maitreya Bodhisattva is seated cross-ankled. Though it is difficult to judge the date of Stupa B51, elements suggest ca. 400 A.D. It is of consequence that the usage of Maitreya Bodhisattva in the set of five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa appears in Haḍḍa and also in China ca. 425-470. There will be further discussion of this topic below in sections VII and VIII.

<sup>254</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 171-172.



E. *Chakhil-i-Ghoundi*

The site of Chakhil-i-Ghoundi is about 1,300 km northeast of the village of Haḍḍa (Fig. 8.28).<sup>255</sup> It is a long, narrow site with four major areas (Fig. 8.37a). The main stupa, which faces east, dominates the site. There are three small stupas near the staircase of the main stupa: C2 (square, at the south of the stairs); and to the north of the stairs is C3 (round)<sup>256</sup> and C4 (square, four pilasters on a side with three dhyānāsana Buddhas, each with head halo). At the rear of the stupa court is Stupa C8, which is square (remaining height 1.3m) and has four standing Buddha relief sculptures on each side without any pilasters. Behind the main stupa court is a group of stupas, some large and some small, of which Barthoux considered C25 to be the oldest.<sup>257</sup> It is square with no pilasters and was constructed on the exterior “of carefully cut slabs of schist.”<sup>258</sup> The base, which is all that survives, is high and has no images or decor. Other stupas of this group, such as C21, show a base with corinthian pilasters and three dhyānāsana Buddhas with head halo and no pedestal. C24 (Fig. 8.37b) has a podium with four seated Buddhas, three with dhyānā mudrā and one with dharmachakra mudrā (in the developed form), all with head halos and no pilasters. The arrangement may represent the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, though the mudrās are slightly different from those of the four Buddhas of the main stone stupa of Sahrī Bahlōl Site B (Figs. 8.25b-e), and there is no apparent way to account for the identity of the image with the dharmachakra mudrā.

1. *Stupa C5*

On a platform to the north of the main stupa court and the Chambers 31a, b and c, is a terrace with the remains of two square stupas, C5 and C6 (Fig. 8.37a). Stupa C5 (3.5m on each side) is the best preserved and has two levels remaining (Fig. 8.37c).<sup>259</sup> The square base (podium) level has four dhyānāsana Buddhas seated singly between pilasters. These Buddhas do not have a pedestal, but they do have a large circular “projecting” mandorla without individual head halo. A similar kind of mandorla was noted in Tapa Kalān stupa TK67 (Fig. 8.30b). However, in the C5 example, flanking the circular mandorla on each side, is a painted lotus stalk with two lotus buds. The next level has a series of three trilobed niches and double pilasters. Each of the niches shown in Fig. 8.37c (said to be the north side, but this may be an error since the north side is said to have been “demolished”) contains a dhyānāsana Buddha on a rectangular pedestal accompanied by four figures inside the niche. On the front are two kneeling worshippers (probably monks) and in the back a Vajrapāṇi and a standing monk. On the south side the central niche shows a Bodhisattva seated on three cushions (?) making the dharmachakra mudrā. A male and female donor figure under an ogival vault flank this Bodhisattva. The left niche (facing) Buddha probably had the abhayā mudrā; the four attendants inside the niche all appear to be monks, the front two holding some round object. The right niche (facing) Buddha is in the dhyāna mudrā and one of the four attendants is Vajrapāṇi holding a thunderbolt. The other two remaining walls are apparently more ruined.<sup>260</sup>

<sup>255</sup> See Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp.173-185 for the site of Chakhil-i-Ghoundi.

<sup>256</sup> One of the few circular stupas found by Barthoux—another is B30.

<sup>257</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 173.

<sup>258</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 183.

<sup>259</sup> C6 has part of the base remaining; it shows three dhyānāsana Buddhas (central one with right shoulder bare), each between a pilaster. Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 179-180.

<sup>260</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 178-179.

The images of the lower level could represent the Buddhas of the four directions or the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. The rather rare survival of the second level niches (three on each side) could indicate the Buddhas of the Three Times, but the presence of Vajrapāṇi in so many (at least three) of the niches rather suggests that these niches represent events or a “typical” representation of Buddha Śākyamuni’s life. The variety of drapery configurations on the main images is noteworthy, as is the motif of the repeated “W” shape patterning of the folds between the knees on most of the seated Buddhas. The “W” fold motif, usually made by incised lines, occurs rather frequently in the Haḍḍa sculptures and was also noted above to be in one of the seated Buddhas on Jauliān Stupa A15 (Fig. 8.11b). The combinations of nicely draped drapery folds in the second level niches with the more repetitive “W” motif folds on the Buddhas of the first level suggest the variations seen in mid 4<sup>th</sup>- early 5<sup>th</sup> century examples in Taxila, an approximate date which the more complex arrangements of figures inside the niches also supports.

#### F. *Pratès*

The site of Pratès faces Tapa Kalān from across the plateau to the west (Fig. 8.28) about 3 km. Stupa P1, the main stupa, has diverse configurations of statues; they are not the same on all sides. On the lower level of the north side are eight relatively plain, round pilasters (H. 1.44m) each with a simple capital (Fig. 8.38b). In the spaces between the pilasters are seven dhyānāsana Buddhas (H.1.5m) each with a small circular head halo. These Buddhas are sitting as though suspended at the top of the bay-niche. Below each Buddha are three small dhyānāsana Buddhas sitting on the floor of each bay (Fig. 8.38b). This configuration would appear to be the seven Buddhas, perhaps each accompanied by the three predecessors of each Buddha. Other niches on this stupa had “walking” Buddhas, and some of the niches had lotus type pedestals, so there is much apparent diversity among the niches in general.<sup>261</sup>

##### 1. *Stupa P8*

North of the main stupa is a group of 62 large and small stupas (Fig. 8.38a). The larger ones as described by Barthoux have interesting variants, often with each side being a different configuration. The example of Stupa P8 (2.55 m on each side) shows the first level of the south side (Fig. 8.38c) with four corinthian pilasters between which is a configuration of a standing Buddha (in full sling mode) with four smaller seated Buddhas distributed at the four corners of each of the three bays. All the seated Buddhas are in dhyānā mudrā except for the lower left image of the left niche (facing), which has the developed form of dharmachakra mudrā and right shoulder bare.<sup>262</sup> A few of the seated Buddhas sit on a cushion shaped seat, but most have no pedestal. This particular composition of five Buddhas with four surrounding a central Buddha appears in Chinese stone pagoda representations from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which could be an indicator of the relative time frame for this kind of configuration in Haḍḍa, such as seen surviving in Stupa P8. We can also note the more elaborate form of the four Buddhas surrounding a main seated Buddha in a bay-niche of Stupa K at Pippala in Taxila (Fig. 8.18b), which seems to be a later variant of the luxurious drapery style seen in the stucco statues of the Mohrā Morādu main stupa. This configuration with four figures at the four corners around a central and larger main image, as seen in both Pratès Stupa P8 and in one of the panels of stupa K at Pippala monastery in Taxila, is an important compositional and iconographic development. Possibly

<sup>261</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 186-188.

<sup>262</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p. 189.

the Pratès example showing three repetitive bay-niches on one side is the more advanced. It possibly dates around the first half (or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter) of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. *Stupa P29*

The lower level of the western side of Stupa P29 (Fig. 8.38a), a square stupa 2.2m on each side, shows alternating arched and trabeated niches, a total of five niches, each with an individual Buddha (Fig. 8.38d).<sup>263</sup> Four of the Buddhas are in the dhyānā mudrā, but the central Buddha is a standing figure with right hand in the abhayā mudrā and the left hand lowered and holding the hem of the robe. The three innermost images all have a pedestal. None appear to have had a halo. The niches are supported by a short corinthian pilaster, which also supports a column (with “bell” shaped capital) in a double level arrangement that is not as elaborate as seen, for example, on the main stupa of Bāgh Gai B12 (Fig. 8.32c) or Stupa B31 (Fig. 8.32e).

The interesting feature here is the configuration of five Buddhas with the central one being distinguished by his standing posture. This kind of configuration puts an emphasis on the central figure, similar to the example in the seven Buddha configuration in the second level of the medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid, where, however, the central figure is the ascetic Buddha (Fig. 8.26b). The Group 20 figures in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 are also related to this kind of representation (Figs. 5.57a, b). This is yet another instance of seeing variation of arrangement in the five Buddha configurations at Haḍḍa, just as we have seen them in Taxila and in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169.

## G. *Gar-naō*

Gar-naō is located at the edge of a small valley at the west of the general site and north of Bāgh-Gai (Fig. 8.28). The main stupa court is rectangular and there are two major stupas at the eastern end, which also has the main entrance. The larger stupa (A1) faces west and the smaller (A2) faces south (Fig. 8.39a). Stupa A1 is 10.5 m on the long side and the podium has a staircase with 11 steps. There are no pilasters on the podium walls, but there are a series of twelve standing Buddha statues along at least one side (probably all three sides since the podium is square), of which the drawing in Fig. 8.39b shows the arrangement. The drapery, according to Barthoux, reveals the shape of the body, which was fully fashioned before applying the drapery.<sup>264</sup> The pedestals appear to be a very simplified shape of the top of a lotus pod. This may be a rather early expression of the lotus pedestal. Barthoux notes quite a bit of diversity of imagery on other sectors, including small Buddha images, as well as some bas-reliefs that suggest scenes from Buddha's life.<sup>265</sup>

Stupa A2 (6.8 m on the long side), though smaller, is better preserved. This stupa has six pilasters on each side (west, north and east). In each of the five bays between the six corinthian pilasters is a triad of standing Buddhas (H. of central image 80 cm; each smaller image 65 cm), each with a head halo and each standing on the flaring pod projecting from the rounded lotus pedestal base (Fig. 8.39c). Altogether there are five such panels, originally on all three sides except the south side with the staircase. The south side has three standing Buddhas on each side of the stairs, two on the main wall and one on the angle wall of the staircase. The Buddhas have a variety of gestures using different combinations

<sup>263</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), p.192. None of the other three sides had remains.

<sup>264</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), fig. 181 and p. 198.

<sup>265</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 197-198.

with the right arm (hanging down and hidden under the garment, or in a full sling mode) and the left arm (hanging down and hidden by the garment, or raised holding the edge of the garment).<sup>266</sup>

The iconography of these five panels on each of the west, north and east sides, each panel with a triad of Buddhas would appear to be quite advanced, as is the appearance of the lotus pedestal for all of the images. The lotus pedestals at Bāgh Gai B56 were suggested to date ca. 400 (see above), though they had a more semi-circular shaping to the bottom portion. One interpretation of this configuration could be the Buddhas of the Three Times repeated five times on each main wall, perhaps alluding to the five directions (East, West, South, North and Center). They do not appear to represent specific events in Buddha Śākyamuni's life. The Stupa A2 configuration appears more abstract, and possibly more associated with the vast number of Buddhas, though still ordered numerically, as seen in the Mahāyāna texts, and obviously stressing the triad of Buddhas.

#### H. Concluding Comments: Haḍḍa

The stupas at Haḍḍa present a dazzling array of remains which with more study may be able to yield important results for understanding some of the early appearances of Mahāyāna type imagery. Unlocking the iconography of the images on the wealth of stupas is still a daunting task, especially considering there is little access to the originals anymore. This huge site was clearly a magnificent Buddhist complex. Hsüan-tsang, who visited the area in ca. 632 and noted that there "many buddhist establishments" but that the "Brethren were very few", also remarked on the beauty of the stupas.<sup>267</sup> It is a site somewhat different from those of the Peshāwar Valley and Taxila, and also from Kāpīsī and Bāmiyān to be discussed below. Each have their own character and probably their own form of practicing Buddhism. A major task for the future is to find out what these were. It is clear from the brief survey here, which focused primarily on the configurations of five Buddhas along with some other sets of multiple Buddhas, that there appears to have been a definite impact of the Haḍḍa art upon that of China in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century, both stylistically and iconographically.

It is with the arrangements found on some of the stupas of Haḍḍa that the forms of the five Buddhas in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 most closely agree. It is known that Haḍḍa was producing by the 4<sup>th</sup> century and had already achieved renown by ca. 400 when Fa-hsien visited there. So even though the dating may be tenuous, it cannot be denied that Haḍḍa had in its midst similar iconographic groups as seen in Cave 169, and that it was an influential site for the Chinese pilgrims of the time to visit. From all appearance Haḍḍa is a site that cannot be overlooked or underestimated, particularly when searching for the prototypes and ideas seen in the early Buddhist art of the locale of Kansu in northwest China. This observation can be further affirmed by realizing that most all of the Chinese pilgrims of the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century went to Haḍḍa to see the Buddha-relics kept there (see list of these above in the introduction to this chapter).

Though there is no clear way yet to determine a chronology of these Haḍḍa sites beyond a general dating, at present most opinion suggests that much of its work was during a 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century range, though it could well go into the 6<sup>th</sup> century as well. It would of course be most informative if we could see a development and change process based on chronologically reliable data. However, if we take

<sup>266</sup> Barthoux (1933 and 2001), pp. 198-199.

<sup>267</sup> "About two li to the east (or southeast) of the capital stood a great stone tope (stupa) about 300 feet high which had marvellous sculptures ..." T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (A.D. 629-645)*, Delhi, (1961 reprint of original publication by the Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1904), p. 183.

a general overview of the group of Haḍḍa materials which were surveyed above, we could say that there appears to be a development from the simpler to the more elaborate, varied, diverse and denser configurations. Along those lines the groups would seem to evolve with respect to the five Buddha configurations as follows:

1. Tapa Kalān:  
 Stupa TK67: row of five seated Buddhas (Fig. 8.30b)  
 Stupa TK86: row of five standing Buddhas (Fig. 8.30c)  
 Stupa TK97: three plus two seated Buddhas (Fig. 8.30d)  
 Stupa TK100: three plus two seated Buddhas (Fig. 8.30e)
2. Tapa-i-Kafarihā:  
 Stupa K43: second level of main stupa, five seated dhyānāsana Buddhas, each with pedestal and pointed arch niche between pilasters (Fig. 8.31b)
3. Bāgh-Gai:  
 Stupa B51: row of five standing images: four Buddhas and one Bodhisattva (Maitreya) in the center (Figs. 8.33b, c)
4. Pratès:  
 Stupa P8: three panels of five Buddhas (in each the central Buddha is standing, other four are seated, one at each of the four corners of the panel) (Fig. 8.38c )  
 Stupa P29: five niches between double pilasters; niches alternating pointed arch and trabeated; Buddha in central niche is standing, the other four Buddhas are dhyānāsana (Fig. 8.38d )
5. Gar-naō:  
 Main Stupa A2: five panels separated by pilasters; each panel with three standing Buddhas, all on lotus pedestals (Fig. 8.39c)

These groups, which are admittedly difficult to date chronologically, suggest, however, that there is continually evolving changes in iconographic programs, including those with five image configurations. With respect to the five Buddha configurations, we can apprehend what may be possibly six different configurations that could show a general evolution from:

- 1) simple five seated or standing Buddhas without any niches or pilaster divisions;
- 2) possible clustering of three plus two to equal five (all seated and divided into these two groups by pilasters);
- 3) group of five Buddhas (one standing in center, others all seated) in alternating arched and trabeated niches separated by pilasters (double in the case of P29);
- 4) row of five standing images: 4 Buddhas and a Maitreya Bodhisattva (the latter in the center), without niches or pilaster divisions;
- 5) more complex arrays with individual panels divided by pilasters and each containing one standing and four dhyānāsana Buddhas;
- 6) five panels each with three Buddhas standing on a lotus pedestal and the panels divided by pilaster columns.

The first four types also align to a remarkable extent with what we have seen in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169:

Group 16 (Figs. 4.25, 4.38): west wall: row of five seated dhyānāsana Buddha sculptures

Group 23 (Figs. 5.30a, b): south wall (upper part): row of two plus three dhyānāsana Buddha sculptures

Group 20 (Figs. 5.57a, b): south wall (lower part): row of five Buddha sculptures, one standing

Group 12 (Fig. 7.41 ): circular configuration of five images: one cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya) and four Buddhas (two standing, two seated).

The last two types (Groups 5 and 6 above) appear in Northern Wei stupas from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

In our study presented in Chapters 4 through 7 these groups at Ping-ling ssu were independently dated as follows:

Group 16: ca. 385-400

Group 23: ca. 410-415

Group 20: ca. 415-420

Group 12: ca. 425

We can tentatively suggest that the representations of the five Buddha configurations in Cave 169 appear to have sources in the Gandhāra-Afghanistan region, especially as seen in the remarkable parallels with the examples from Haḍḍa, which undoubtedly show certain movements in the Buddhist art of the greater Gandhāran region, even though we cannot specifically date them at present. One might even be able to suggest that the dating of the Ping-ling ssu examples (which have been dated independently) have the chance of furnishing a relative dating for the appearance of similar iconographic groups in Haḍḍa sometime around the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century with respect to the first four types and ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century with respect to the last two types.

## V. AFGHANISTAN: SHOTORAK

Shotorak is an important site located 60 km north of Kabul in the area of Kāpīsī (Kāpīśa). It was excavated by Jacques Meunié in 1937 and yielded many important stone sculptures of the Kushana period in particular. The monastery appears to have had a relatively long history.<sup>268</sup> Some of the later works in Court D show several interesting subsidiary stupas with elaborate niches and stucco sculptures. Though none appear to have the arrangement of five Buddhas, Stupas D3 and D4 are of interest for the current study with respect to the eight Buddhas (or possibly seven Buddhas with Maitreya), and the Buddhas of the ten directions.

### A. *Stupa D3*

Stupa D3 is a small stupa (surviving H. 2.4 m.) located in an alcove in Court D (Fig. 8.40a-c). The podium or base (called a “sub-basement” by Meunié) is square with simple plaster moldings (most of which are missing).<sup>269</sup> Above the base (podium or sub-basement) are three levels and then the dome, the latter now missing (Figs. 8.40c). The second level (Level B) is also square; it has a single large trabeated niche in the center of each of the four sides. The niche is flanked by a double stage pilaster: a square pilaster supporting a “colonnette,” now only indicated by the stone underpinning (Fig. 8.40c). Above a bracket cornice sits the slightly smaller third level (Level C). It is circular and appears to have

<sup>268</sup> Jacques Meunié, *Shotorak*, Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan, Vol. X, Paris, 1942, pp. 7, 9.

<sup>269</sup> Meunié (1942), p. 19.



12 pilasters (about 32 cm apart), whose stone construction indicates that the pilaster would have been corinthian type.<sup>270</sup> The fourth level (Level D) is also circular, but seems to be divided into ten arched niches with supporting pilasters. The stupa is composed of diaper-like masonry construction, which is compatible with that of the Taxila region, generally dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., but it is possible that this form of construction remained standard in Afghanistan for a longer period of time than in Taxila.

It would appear that Level B with one trabeated niche in each side can be taken to be a representation of one Buddha in each of the four cardinal directions in axial alignment. This is comparable with Stupas K1 and N4 at Taxila (Fig. 8.3b), discussed above as an early square base stupa with the early form of semi-ashlar masonry construction, dated by Marshall to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century, by Behrendt to ca. 200 (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century) and by Fitzsimmons to around the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. Like Stupas K1 and N4 (and also J1) at Dharmarājikā in Taxila, this Stupa D3 at Shotorak may represent the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni). Level D, apparently with 10 niches, perhaps refers to the Buddhas of the ten directions, a theme possibly also encountered in the circular drum of the Ali Masjid Stupa No. 6 in the Khyber Pass (Fig. 8.26d). It is more difficult to assess the possible iconography of the 12 niche configuration on Level C; perhaps there is reference to the zodiac using images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as seen in the ceiling paintings of Cave GK Cave 20 at Kumtura, probably dating around the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>271</sup>

Overall in Stupa D3 there is a strong emphasis on the square base (repeated twice: Levels A and B) with circular levels above (also repeated twice: Levels C and D), so the dome would appear lifted up high. In the dating of Stupa D3, one can consider the remains of a niche in the same alcove as Stupa D3. This niche, in the southeast corner of the alcove was discovered partially walled up by the walls of D9, a later construction (Fig. 8.40a). The remains of clay statuary in the niche shows a seated dhyanāsana Buddha attended by donor figures (Fig. 8.40d). The head of the Buddha, also in clay, was found detached (Fig. 8.40e). Stylistically speaking, the Buddha figure is broadly shaped, strong and solid in shaping of the form and with thick curls of hair. The drapery is primarily of rib fold and has the elegant, fluid cascade of hems over the legs and on to the top of the pedestal in narrow looped swags with delicate waving hem lines in the area under the left leg. This form of image appears to be quite early, as does the head with its thick wavy hair and chiseled, but not outlined features. Given the various considerations, it would seem that both niche D3 and Stupa D3 date ca. 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### B. *Stupa D4*

Stupa D4 at Shotorak sits in a small chamber on the south side of Court D (Fig. 8.40a). When first discovered, the walls of the small chamber still had remains of red paint. Stupa D4 is a small stupa with a circular base (Dia. 2 m). Most of the dome had fallen off (perhaps from the shaking of an earthquake) and parts were found leaning on the east wall of the chamber, but some of the original plaster stucco finishing and two of the clay and stucco images were found to survive.<sup>272</sup>

The circular podium (base) has 10 pilasters of the corinthian type forming 10 bays (Fig. 8.41a). Above is a bracket cornice. The second level, raised up on three receding step-like levels, is octagonal in form. It has eight arched, deep niches, one in each of the eight faces, which are separated by tall pillar

<sup>270</sup> Meunié (1942), p. 23. However, he does not mention the number of pilasters or niches on this level or on the level above, so this is just an estimate judging from the elevation drawing.

<sup>271</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 708–714 and figs. 4.83 a, b, c.

<sup>272</sup> Meunié (1942), p. 25.

pilasters (“colonnettes”). The remains of plaster covering several of these niches shows an incised zig-zag design in the center band of the molded rim of the arches. These eight niches must originally have held images. Above the bracketed cornice is the third level, which is circular with eight image niches, alternating trabeated and arched. The arches of these niches are all supported by short corinthian pilasters. Two dhyānāsana Buddhas from this level were uncovered during excavation (Fig. 8.41b). They have a circular head halo and sit directly on the floor of the niche without pedestal and without any attendants. They are made of clay with a lime covering. In the spandrels between the niches the remains of a bird with spreading wings was found (Figs. 8.41a, b). A bracket cornice above the third level supported the dome of the stupa, which was mostly destroyed when excavated. The construction, like Stupa D3 and others at this site, is diaper-like masonry.

The circular podium with its ten bays could refer to the ten directions. They are not symmetrically arrayed around the circumference (see the elevation in Fig. 8.41a) to align exactly with all four compass points. This is not possible with 10 niches, which will only align in two compass point directions and not in four. There does not appear to have been sculptural images in these bay-niches, though it is possible there was some paintings. The octagonal second level with arched niches may refer to the eight Buddhas (or seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva) and also possibly to the eight directions of space. The circular third level, which matches with the octagonal form of the second level and also has eight image niches, and would appear to be a repeat of the eight-Buddhas (or seven Buddhas plus Maitreya) and the eight directions of space. It could well be that on one level Maitreya Bodhisattva was shown and on the other level Maitreya as a Buddhas was shown. In that matter, Stupa D4 could resemble the stucco stupa from Cell 9 at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.9a-c) at Taxila, dated above to ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The date of Stupa D4 is probably later than that of Stupa D3, but not by many years.

## VI. AFGHANISTAN: BĀMIYĀN

The complex site of Bāmiyān in northern Afghanistan, enormous and spectacular in size and importance, is sadly greatly ruined, which compounds the difficulties of dating and understanding the site. Nevertheless, what remains clearly reveals some extraordinary iconography and extraordinary art. Some of the early caves at Bāmiyān with remains of paintings and sculpture were discussed in Vol. I,<sup>273</sup> including the Eastern Great Buddha, which was dated there to ca. mid or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>274</sup> Many of the caves at the eastern end of the site and around the Eastern Great Buddha appear to show early features in structure, niche shapes and ornamentation, including some caves now without any sculptural or painting remains. Interestingly, much of the basic structural components and design elements of the early group of caves seems to closely correspond with what one sees in the stupas at Haḍḍa, only translated on the inside of a cave rather than appearing on the external structure like the stupas of Haḍḍa. It seems that some of the art forms and iconography are related between these sites. Yet, as with all these major areas of Afghanistan and Gandhāra, while there are connections, each site has a particular character, possibly reflecting the Buddhism practiced at those sites. A close study of the

<sup>273</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 210-239.

<sup>274</sup> Though there is some recent discussion of carbon 14 dating of the colossal Bāmiyān images, in my view, the reliability of the C14 dating is still very problematic because of so many variable factors, including the standards by which the C14 reading is judged. Regardless of C14 dating, it is therefore important to have independent dating through other means, including stylistic analysis, historical records and other data.

art could eventually help to discern these doctrinal differences and possibly to judge more precisely the way in which Mahāyāna Buddhist icons emerged.

Two particular points are important to note: 1) Bāmiyān does not seem to have had any relics of the Buddha, and in that matter, did not have the same prestige as sites that did, such as some in Haḍḍa, Peshāwar, and Taxila. This could be one reason that explains why pilgrims such as Fa-hsien and his group went to Nagarahāra and Haḍḍa, but did not venture further into Afghanistan to go to Kāpīśī or Bāmiyān. Even though Bāmiyān may have had the Eastern Great Buddha by ca. 402 A.D., the time of Fa-hsien's visit to Chi-pin and Haḍḍa, that alone may not have been enough reason to make the difficult journey to Bāmiyān, since the primary reason for the journey of the pilgrims was to see the relics of the Buddha and the sites associated directly with the Buddha and his past lives. Further, we know from Kuwayama's work, that the travel routes of that time were conducive to traveling to Swat, Peshāwar and Haḍḍa, but were not as conducive to travel from the iron pillar in the Pamirs into Bactria and from there to Bāmiyān because the political situation and the journey via that route was considered too dangerous.<sup>275</sup> 2) It is well-known that Bāmiyān has some spectacular array of images, in addition to the colossal Buddhas. These appear to express multiple Buddhas as described in the Mahāyāna sutras. Other sites may have had such configurations and not survived, but at least at Bāmiyān there remains the evidence of a doctrine that could support the making of colossal imagery and imagery of the Buddhas of many directions and countless numbers. Because of these two factors, this site is set apart in importance with respect especially to developments appearing in China in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Specifically with regard to the problem at hand, the five Buddha configuration, several caves at the eastern end of the site appear to be pertinent, as briefly noted below.

#### A. Cave 24

Cave 24, one of the earliest remaining caves, possibly dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>276</sup> has paintings of a grouping of five Buddhas remaining on the underside of the projecting cornice between the walls and the dome ceiling on each corner of the north wall (Fig. 8.42a, b).<sup>277</sup> These were presumably originally at each of the four corners. All are in dhyāna mudrā and have large circular encompassing halos and a circular head halo that is mostly within the encompassing halo. Their sizes are graded to fit the available space, so those with the most ample space in the center of the triangular corner shape are largest. Since these images appear at the transition to the area of the dome, which has a sequence of rows of Buddhas and a teaching Bodhisattva (Maitreya) at the center, these five may herald the Buddhas of the five directions of space (four quarters plus the center). The walls seem to have contained possible Buddha preaching groups, but the upper portions of the cave suggest a transformation to the vast realms of space with multiple Buddhas (perhaps the thousand Buddhas) before reaching Maitreya in the center.

#### B. Cave 129

In Cave 129 in the transition space between the walls and the dome (the tambour), there are painted in the space between the squinch arches at the corners on each of the three walls (north or rear wall,

<sup>275</sup> See Kuwayama (2006), pp. 110-126.

<sup>276</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 214-217.

<sup>277</sup> T. Higuchi, ed., *Bāmiyān, Art and Archaeological Remains on the Buddhist Cave Temples in Afghanistan 1970-1978*, 4 vols., Tokyo, 1983-84, I, Pl. 2.1, 2, 3; II, pl. 7.1.

east and west side walls) a large seated Buddha flanked by ten smaller Buddhas with varied mudrās, five seated Buddhas on each side (Fig. 8.43a, b). All the Buddhas have a body and head halo and sit on a circular white cushion (similar to cushion-like seats in some Haḍḍa stucco images, such as examples at Pratès in Figs. 8.38c, d). These configurations appear to represent a main Buddha surrounded by the Buddhas of the ten directions.

The squinch arch in each of the four corners has five rows of dhyānāsana Buddhas and a larger Buddha in the semicircular core, probably indicative of the multiple Buddhas appearing in the four quarters and nadir with the core being the center apex, as often mentioned in the early Mahāyāna sutras. The three main Buddhas (one on each of the main walls) could refer to the Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future, so the implication of the paintings in the tambour section could suggest all space while the main images suggest all time. Traces of a thousand Buddha configuration, a clearly Mahāyāna conception, appears in the domed ceiling. A suggested dating for this cave to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, probably the latter half, was discussed in Vol. I.<sup>278</sup> Similar configurations of squinch arches appear in Cave 130, also dated in Vol. I to about the same period as Cave 129.

### C. Cave 152

The dome of Cave 152 has rows of seated Buddhas, five or six to each row, all with various mudrās and facing towards the top of the ceiling (Fig. 8.44). These may refer to the thousand Buddhas. They are seated on a white oval cushion or moon seat with oval mandorla and circular head halo. Stylistically they relate to the Devnimori sculptures of ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>279</sup>

### D. Cave 164

This cave is mentioned in this context because of its spectacular ceiling arrangement, which has an interesting bearing on the arrangements seen on the drum/dome of some stupas in Taxila and Haḍḍa. The domed ceiling of Bāmiyān Cave 164 (Fig. 8.45) has at its base a circular row of 28 standing Buddhas (presumably Buddhas—all are erased now except for the tall body halo and round head halo). The number 28 was seen in the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu in Taxila and discussed there as probably indicating the 28 predecessors of Śākyamuni as related in the *Buddhvaṃsa*. The paintings on the dome of Cave 164 could be a similar case—it is certainly a remains that lends credence to the usage of the number 28, and as used around the drum section of the dome of a stupa. Cave 164 has further elaboration of the dome with ten arched niches, each for a standing image (presumably Buddha), whose painted halos still remain. This number suggests the ten direction Buddhas. The delicacy of the arched niches, which have a very slight peak, recalls the carving of the Favez-tepe stone niche of ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.6). Cave 164 possibly dates in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century.

### E. Cave 51

Bāmiyān Cave 51 (Grotte G) is now largely in ruins, but when it was discovered by the French Mission in 1930, there was a clear configuration of five dhyānāsana Buddhas in stucco attached to the tambour section at the rear of the cave (north) between the squinch arches. This portion of the wall was repro-

<sup>278</sup> Rhie (1999), p. 224.

<sup>279</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 224-225.

duced in watercolor on site at that time by J. Carl and provides a clear indication of the configuration (Fig. 8.46). This cave was studied and dated to ca. mid-5<sup>th</sup> century in Vol. I.<sup>280</sup> The various details and elements are also discussed there. This is a clear case of five individually conceived Buddhas as one group, with the central and largest image being identifiable as Śākyamuni by the presence of Vajrapāṇi at his left side (a donor appears on the other side). Each Buddha sits on a lotus seat. There are two rows in the lotus petals in the pedestals of the four smaller Buddhas and four rows of lotus petals for the larger central image. A tree canopy appears behind the central and two outer Buddhas. The mudrās vary between dhyāna and dharmachakra, with the central Buddha in dhyāna mudrā.

A cosmological thrust is given to the cave by the presence of multiple dhyānāsana Buddhas in the lintels and in the semicircular bands of the squinch arches at each of the four corners, which may indicate the multiple Buddhas of the four directions. Among the array of different groups of Buddhas in this cave, the five Buddhas on the tambour section of the north wall stand out as one distinctive kind. It is likely that they are the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, though there is no way to certainly determine this as yet. Further, if the central Buddha is Śākyamuni, the Buddhas would not be presented in linear order, but according to another principal.

Finally, with regard to the sites of Central Asia, I have not seen examples in the early art of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century of the five Buddha configuration. Examples from Lou-lan (the wooden lintel) show five Buddhas, but this is a broken piece and is originally likely to have been seven Buddhas. At Kizil in Cave 38 there is the interesting example of five reliquary boxes painted on the rear wall of the central pillar (facing the Parinirvana Scene on the back wall of the rear corridor), but this is difficult to interpret in the context of the five Buddha imagery and without knowing the images that would have been placed in the three niches of that wall.

## VII. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

### A. Sets of Multiple Buddhas in Gandhāra and Afghanistan

It appears from the initial study presented here, that there is specific meaning concerning the sets of multiple Buddhas seen on the surviving stupas and temples of Gandhāra and Afghanistan. This is evident from the consistency of the repetition of certain numbers of images which seem likely to imply more than mere random decoration. If considered carefully, some arrangements appear to conform to certain sets of multiple Buddhas cited in Buddhist texts. We have considered here texts such as the *Buddhavaṃsa* (from the Pali Canon), the *Dirghāgama* (*Ch'ang a-han ching*) from the Sanskrit tradition of the Sarvāstivāda Canon, and some Mahāyāna sutras translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425, such as the *Bhadrakalpika*, which were considered throughout the study of Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (listed in Appendix II). These seem to provide a plausible basis for interpreting the sets of multiple Buddhas that are seen in some examples in Gandhāra and Afghanistan. These include the 28 (or 25) Buddhas (around the drum of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu in Taxila, and around the base of the dome in Cave 164 at Bāmiyān), the seven Buddhas (in the second level of the medium-size stupa at Ali Masjid), the seven Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva (in the pedestal platform of shrine "c" in court XXI-Vii at Takht-i-Bāhī and in the stucco stupa of Cell 9 at Mohrā Morādu, the six Buddhas (base of the medium-size stupa at Ali Masjid), the three Buddhas (many instances, including the important Stupa

<sup>280</sup> Rhie (1999), pp. 217-223.

D5 at Jauliān with some surviving inscriptions), the four Buddhas (base level of Stupa P37 at Takht-i-Bāhī, the major example of the “main stone stupa” at Sahrī Bahlōl Site B, and the base of Stupa C24 at Chakhil-i-Ghoundi, Haḍḍa), the eight Buddhas (around the circular drum/dome of Stupa P37 at Takht-i-Bāhī), and the ten Buddhas (around the third level of Shotorak Stupa D4 and in Bāmiyān Cave 129). There appears to be no clear case of the thousand Buddhas, but perhaps indications can be seen in Bāmiyān. With regard to the five Buddha configurations, the primary subject of this study, we can confirm that there were many configurations of the five Buddhas as a set current in the Buddhist world of Gandhāra and Afghanistan in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, especially as seen in the areas of Taxila, Peshawar, Haḍḍa and Bāmiyān (individually listed below in chronological groupings).

One important question with all of these sets of multiple Buddhas becomes the identity of their textual tradition and their lineage and/or cosmological implication. That is, the sets of five Buddhas can be following the *Buddhavaṃsa*, a book of the Pali canon, which clearly mentions the first five Buddhas of this eon (Bhadrakalpa) and “the five wise ones of the Bhadrakalpa” and specifically names them, and/or the *Bhadrakalpika sūtra* (translated in 300 A.D. into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa), and/or the *Dirghāgama* (*Ch’ang a-han ching*, translated into Chinese in 413 by Buddhayaśas and Chu Fō-nien). Further, there are spatial-cosmological implications regarding the sets of multiple Buddhas, particularly as used in the Mahāyāna sūtras and these may, in some cases, translate over into the image configurations. It is also possible that there is more than one interpretation to be made with any given set of multiple Buddhas in the art and that not all of these configurations represent the same thing in each instance. That is, there may not be a universally common identification attached (for example, Hinayānists may read the images one way and Mahāyānists another). It is a task to see if they can be identified to the point of being specific as being related to one or the other tradition. That is, is there a definitely Hinayāna identity to these sets as opposed to a definitely Mahāyāna identity?

With regard to the five Buddhas, it is apparent that they were portrayed in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century in more than one way, and there appears to have been a developing and changing iconographic implication to the changes and to the principle of arrangement or layout of the five images. From those we have found so far, they are seen in at least four different modes or portrayal: 1) all the same repetitive dhyānāsana Buddhas; 2) some with differences in robe and mudrā; 3) sets that group three plus two; 4) and sets of four Buddhas with one Bodhisattva, who is likely to be Maitreya. All of these variants are seen in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu dating within the first three decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Though the dating of the Gandhāran and Afghanistan art is not yet precise, we can probably correctly assume that Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, which is quite clearly datable to the first three decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, reflects those iconographies from Gandhāra and Afghanistan (especially Haḍḍa), or elsewhere, and not vice-versa.

### B. Significant Factors Regarding the Reading of Images on Stupas

Regarding the interpretation and the reading of the various schemes of the multiple Buddhas, there appears to be no one single method, principle or pattern of arrangement and reading of the individual figures in the art of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century in Gandhāra and Afghanistan. Rather, there seems to have been continual change and experimentation. We can perhaps see the outlines of these changes, which probably reflect the changing views and interpretations of the Buddhist community (particularly of the learned monks, probably in conjunction with the donors). Some of the observations devolving from the study above are summarized below.



### 1. *Unified Scheme*

The addition of the images around the dome of a stupa in a unified pattern appears in the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu (28 Buddhas) and in the base of the dome vault of Cave 164 at Bāmiyān. Other possible cases, though more problematic, could be the addition of the shrines in the Lower Stupa Court at Takht-i-Bāhī (28 Buddhas) and in the South Stupa Court X at Takht-i-Bāhī (25, 26, 28 or 29 Buddhas). Also, the main images around the podium of the main stupa at Jauliān could represent this pattern, though it is debatable.

The ten niches around the drum of the dome at Ali Masjid Stupa No. 6 and Shotorak Stupa D4 are surviving examples of what was likely to have been a rather common scheme, and one which has strong Mahāyāna connotations. This would appear to have been the case, particularly in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The drum portion of the stupa lends itself to the portrayal of a single unit, while the four distinct sides of the square base and square levels of the stupa would seem to be more prone to discrete or individual interpretation by wall, and also probably indicative of a directional focus. The appearance of the directional focus for the square base and levels may be ubiquitous and perhaps naturally understood, since from very early times in India the four directions were consciously emphasized, such as by the four entrance gates at the four cardinal directions in the Great Stupa at Sāñcī.

### 2. *Individual Side Scheme*

The clear cases where the images on each wall (and each level) appear to be discrete or contained within the wall and not additive with images on the other sides and/or levels occurs in Stupa A15 and D5 at Jauliān, both of which have inscriptions which indicate a discrete reading for each wall. For Stupa A15 there are inscriptions of individually different donors for each side, and for Stupa D5 there are some inscriptions of the identity of the Buddhas that show that the Buddhas are separately repeated on each side.

Besides the two quite clear examples of Stupas A15 and D5, there are many others that would appear to apply to this category, including most of the four-sided stupa bases and the square levels above the base. It is also possible that the five large stucco Buddhas on the east, south and north sides of the main stupa at Jauliān present a discrete, though repetitive, arrangement on each side, rather than an additive one. It is still a difficult point to determine if the large panels on the podium of large stupas would be additive around the whole podium or simply a discrete, wall by wall, individual grouping.

### 3. *Chronologically Linear Presentation*

In some cases, such as with the 28 Buddha configurations, the reading would appear to be chronologically linear. Also, in most of the seven Buddha configurations (and the corollary of the seven Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva (or Buddha?) making eight images), the reading is chronologically linear in most cases. The same may be true of the four Buddhas, the five Buddhas and the six Buddhas, since they all pertain respectively to the first four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (four), or to the first five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (with Maitreya as Buddha or as Bodhisattva), or to the six predecessors of Śākyamuni (six). The case of the main stone stupa of Sahri Bahlōl site B is perhaps the clearest to determine. Based upon a conjectural identification of the images and elements in the reliefs in the pedestals of each of the four Buddha images (Figs. 8.25b, c, d, e), the arrangement appears to be chronologically linear. Without some identifying factor other than merely the Buddha image, such as the figures in

the pedestals, the presence of Maitreya Bodhisattva, or some other device, it is difficult, if not impossible, to clearly discern whether simply a row of four, five or even seven Buddhas is chronologically linearly positioned or not. It is also of importance to note that the order of reading generally appears to conform to the pattern of circumambulation. Since this factor tends to be taken into account in one way or another in most, and probably all, the schemes, this is one at least relatively abiding factor that must be seriously considered.

#### 4. *Non-chronologically Linear Presentation*

In some cases it is clear that the presentation of images is not chronologically lineal, at least in the primary ordering (there may be secondary ordering in the more complex schemes). Such an occurrence can be apprehended when at least one image is definitely identifiable. This interesting and important development can be seen especially in cases where the identifiable image is in a position that would not be expected for a chronological depiction. For example, where the central image is clearly identifiable as Maitreya or Śākyamuni: if the group is being chronologically presented they should be positioned at the end of a lineal (not circular) row, but in fact they appear in the center of the row. Examples of this presentation are seen in Level B of the medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid (Fig. 8.26b) and in the southwest side (front side) of stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai in Haḍḍa (Figs. 8.33b, c). In the former, among the seven Buddhas of the row, Śākyamuni is identifiable as the central image, which is shown as an ascetic Buddha (Śākyamuni is the only Buddha to have the ascetic appearance). In the latter, Maitreya Bodhisattva appears as the central image of the row of five images (four standing Buddhas and one standing Bodhisattva). Both of these configurations imply some other system in operation other than the chronologically lineal arrangement.

Another strategically important case is the appearance of four smaller Buddhas placed in the four corners around a central, larger Buddha, as seen in Stupa K at Pippala (Fig. 8.18b) and in Stupa P8 at Pratès in Haḍḍa (Fig. 8.38c). This formation, though it could still be chronologically lineal, does not naturally appear linear and can indicate a spatial arrangement of four Buddhas surrounding a central Buddha, who is given prominence by being larger. This can be taken as the representation of a circular form with an image in the center and could be interpreted as a beginning stage of the maṇḍala form utilizing the spatial form of a circle with a center, a form that would imply the four cardinal directions with a center (zenith/nadir). Both of these examples appear to occur rather late, that is, probably around the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter or mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. It is of interest to note that this arrangement occurs in Chinese miniature stone stupas from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, where they are often apparently associated with *Lotus Sutra* iconography. This is a significant issue and will be addressed more below and in subsequent volumes of this series.

Another variation of the non-chronologically lineal presentation occurs in the combinations of 3 + 2 Buddhas (or 2 + 3), such as seen in Stupa A15 at Jauliāñ (south, west and north walls). Rather early, straightforward examples of the 3 + 2 combination of Buddhas appears in Stupas TK97 and TK100 at Tapa Kalān at Haḍḍa (Figs. 8.30d and 8.30e). A variation of this format in terms of three Buddhas plus two Bodhisattvas appears in Level B of Stupa D4<sup>281</sup> at Jauliāñ (Fig. 8.16b), which probably dates later than the Haḍḍa Stupas TK97 and TK100. It is of note that stone stupas dated in the 420's and 430's

<sup>281</sup> Level B of Stupa D4 appears to have two Bodhisattvas on the East and (probably) West side at the two ends of the row. On the North and South sides the two Bodhisattvas flank the central Buddha in the row. D1 is more difficult to explain because of missing images. See above, Chapter 8, section II.C.2.d.iv.

from Kansu with the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva sometimes have two Bodhisattvas in addition to six Buddhas. In that case the Bodhisattvas are clearly demarcated by posture: Maitreya in the cross-ankled posture and Siddhārtha in the contemplative posture (Stupa of Pai, see Fig. 8.17f).

### 5. *Spatial Interpretation*

The spatial interpretation (combined or uncombined with the chronologically lineal reading) refers to the clear indication of directions of space: 1) the four cardinal directions; 2) the four cardinal and four intermediate directions (8 directions); 3) the four cardinal directions, zenith and nadir (six directions); 4) the four cardinal and four intermediate directions, the zenith and nadir (10 directions). These designations all appear in the Mahāyāna sutras translated into Chinese by ca. 425 A.D. (The special case of the five Buddhas is discussed in detail below). Though a spatial implication or reading may actually be ubiquitous according to the four square sides of the square plan stupas in Gandhāra and Afghanistan, it is difficult to certainly establish this.

There is, however, clear confirmation that such was the case in China with regard to the stone stupas of Liang chou from Kansu. By combining the ancient Chinese trigram system in conjunction with the lineage of the seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva, these eight images are specifically linked to the eight directions of space by direct association with a particular trigram and/or trigram image (which represents the abstract trigram). When the chronological lineage of seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva is linked with the spatial scheme of the trigrams and trigram images, the images can both be clearly identified and definitely linked to a cosmic direction. Such an arrangement can then be interpreted to be a representation of all space and all time, the two fundamental aspects of the phenomenal world (or world of saṃsāra). The stucco stupa from Cell No. 9 at Mohrā Morādu may represent this kind of presentation (Fig. 8.9a), but it is likely that many more stupas in Gandhāra and Afghanistan do also.

Several points can be made that seem possible: the square sides of a stupa can, in and of themselves, indicate a spatial direction (this is known even from early Indian Buddhist art and is evident at the Great Stupa of Sāñcī). Further, the axial alignments to the four cardinal compass points noted in some large stupas, such as the images on the drum/dome of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu and Stupas K1 and N4 at Dharmarājikā, are indicators of the intention to demarcate the spatial layout, which in turn is a factor that ultimately supports a maṇḍala concept, since the center of a stupa is envisioned or understood as the axis mundi. When the portrayal is in a flat panel, such as in Stupa K at Pippala (Fig. 8.18b), it is difficult to know how the directional component is organized, and ambiguity and variation can arise as to the order of reading. It is possible, however, that in this case the specific order does not matter—any order will suffice, but the four outer Buddhas (presumably surrounding the larger, central Buddha) would represent some combination of east, south, west and north. It is my surmise that we are witnessing, particularly as seen in the presentation of images on stupas in Gandhāra and Afghanistan during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, the development and evolution of the concept of the maṇḍala form using images that will ultimately emerge as a combination with evolving ideas of tantric Mahāyāna Buddhism that were probably taking place in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries in this area. There will be more discussion of this below.

### C. *Summary of the Development of the Five Buddha Configurations in Gandhāra and Afghanistan*

With respect to the five Buddha configuration, the primary focus of this study, we can summarize below the developments seen in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan as has been laid out in detail in this chapter.

#### *Group I: the early group: ca. mid-3<sup>rd</sup> to mid-4<sup>th</sup> century*

The earliest representations appear to be those with five Buddhas seated or standing in one row with very little distinction (perhaps some distinction with the mudrās and robe depictions). These include the stone platform relief in Fig. 8.22c from shrine “d” in the Southeast Stupa Court XIVii at Takht-i-Bāhī (ca. 250-350 A.D.), and the stucco images from Stupas TK67 (five dhyānāsana Buddhas) and TK86 (five standing Buddhas) at Tapa Kalān in Haḍḍa (Figs. 8.30b and 8.30c), which may be relatively early, perhaps ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *Group II: ca. mid 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century (older, more conservative, forms)*

In the decades around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century there is apparently a continuation of the five dhyānāsana Buddhas, especially as seen in the lowest level of the square stupas, such as Stupa P37 in the Stupa Court XX at Takht-i-Bāhī (Fig. 8.23a) and the ruined stucco stupa at Sahrī Bahlōl Site B (Fig. 8.24). These show elaborations in the stupa décor, such as with the pilasters that suggest a date later than the examples of Group I.

At the same time new forms are also appearing and overlapping with the older types. These we can place in Group III.

#### *Group III: ca. 400–early 5<sup>th</sup> century (new forms)*

Around 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century a number of new arrangements seem to arise. These involve the combinations of groups of images in various permutations of 3 + 2 (or 2 + 3) and 4 + 1, and that involve a non-chronologically lineal presentation that appears to imply a circular arrangement (without a center). These schemes are relatively complex and have variations.

##### *1) 3 + 2 arrangement*

a) The 3 + 2 form appears both with all five images as Buddhas (Jauliān A15 and Tapa Kalān TK97 and TK100). The latter is more simply portrayed with all images the same size and with the same robe portrayal and mudra. The only main distinction is the separation into two group by pilasters (Figs. 8.30d, e). This grouping may still be linearly interpreted (i.e., chronologically arranged from Krakucchanda to Maitreya, with the three grouping being the earlier three Buddhas (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa) and the two grouping the later two (Śākyamuni and Maitreya). However, Stupa A15 at Jauliān is more complex and interesting, using varying sizes and varying locations to indicate the 3 + 2 grouping. In that way possible combinations of readings become, for example, the three Buddhas of larger size in the center as distinct from two smaller Buddhas flanking the central group of three. On the west wall (Figs. 8.11d, e), the beset preserved, the two smaller Buddhas are distinguished further by sitting on a lotus pedestal and by having the dharmachakra mudrā. In interpreting this configuration of five, the three could be the three predecessors of Śākyamuni or the last three of the five, namely Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya, which would have the added meaning of the Buddhas

of the Three Times. The two Buddhas would be Śākyamuni and Maitreya (the last two of the five), or Krakucchanda and Kanakamuni (the first two of the five) respectively. This grouping does not lend itself to a straight-forward chronologically lineal interpretation, but rather implies an imaginary joining of the two ends of the group so that the two smaller Buddhas are side by side. The circular joining is, however, without a center. When the two smaller end Buddhas are side by side in this imaginary circular arrangement, then the chronological order is maintained. So this is merely transferring a linear scheme into a virtual or implied circular scheme, but a circle without a center. This is a fairly sophisticated scheme.

b) An even more complicated and presumably evolved usage of the 3 + 2 combination involves three Buddhas and two Bodhisattvas, the latter presumably being Siddhārtha and Maitreya (in one case Maitreya can be identified by the presence of the flask). This arrangement occurs in Level B of Stupa D4 at Jauliāñ (Fig. 8.16b), although there is some room for other possibilities due to the ruined condition of the stupas and the lack of an image in some niches.

## 2) 4 + 1 arrangement

The simple form of this arrangement, which would have a row of four Buddhas and one Bodhisattva (Maitreya) with Maitreya Bodhisattva at the end of the row of five images, is not seen in the available materials on stupas, as far as I have been able to discern. Such examples do, however, exist for the seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva (the Cell No. 9 stucco stupa at Mohrā Morādu in Figs. 8.9a-f, and are confirmed by the Liang chou stone stupas of 420's and 430's (Figs. 7.42, 8.10a ).

a) There is an important example of the 4 + 1 arrangement with five standing images in the front side of Stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai in Haḍḍa (Figs. 8.33b, c). Here the one Bodhisattva, which must be Maitreya, is the central figure flanked by two standing Buddhas. This arrangement clearly places an emphasis on Maitreya Bodhisattva by being in the central position. It also brings to the fore the power and importance of the central position in a line of images. The question then becomes how the others are arranged around the center when the representation is the flat panel on the wall of the base (podium) of the stupa. There are actually 24 different possibilities of alignment when one of the five images is certainly known. Nevertheless, there may be some method to indicate the more likely arrangement. One possibility would be to consider the chronological lineage matching with the circumambulatory needs. Since Maitreya should chronologically be the last of the five images in a circumambulatory system following the chronological sequence of the five Buddhas, the central position would have to be considered as the end. So the beginning (or first Buddha of the Bhadrakalpa, i.e., Krakucchanda) would occur to Maitreya's immediate right and the next Buddha, Kanakamuni, would be second to Maitreya's right (that is, the last Buddha at the left when facing the wall). The third Buddha, Kāśyapa would have to be the outermost Buddhas at Maitreya's left and Śākyamuni would have be the Buddha to Maitreya's immediate left, if we kept the chronological lineage in tact. Thus all the Buddhas are aligned with respect to Maitreya in the center, which gives Maitreya prominence, and the lineal order that fits the circumambulation order is preserved. However, this requires a jump from far left to far right in order to complete the movement and to end up in the center with the fifth image, Maitreya. This is complicated and resorts to making a virtual circle out of a linear presentation, as we saw above with the 3+ 2 grouping in Stupa A15 at Jauliāñ.

It is important to recall that in the case of the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva in the Liang chou stone stupas from Kansu, that there was no break between the last image (Maitreya Bodhisattva) and the first Buddha of the series, in this case Vipśyin. This is easy to do because the arrangement is around the circular drum of the stupa, which is not the same as on a flat panel. However, the basic

system used for the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya around the drum can also be applied to the five Buddhas on a panel if that panel and row of images is envisioned as circular. In such a panel (linear) representation on Stupa B51 with Maitreya Bodhisattva in the center, Śākyamuni would then always be the Buddha at Maitreya's left. If Śākyamuni were to be the central image, then Kāśyapa would always be the Buddha at his left and Maitreya the Buddha (or Bodhisattva) at his right, and so on. The operating factor here is that the lineal arrangement is actually interpreted in terms of a circle without a center.

The experimentation at this juncture (as seen in the stupas such as Jauliāñ A15 and Bāgh Gai B51) is driving the representations to become clearer on the one hand (such as with respect to emphasizing a certain prominence to Maitreya Bodhisattva, which was obviously the desired intent), but on the other hand more difficult to decipher and to execute with regard to circumambulation worship.

A similar arrangement as seen in the front wall of the podium of Stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai can be seen in the platform of the pedestal (like the platform appearing in shrines "c" and "d" of Southeast Stupa Court XIVii of earlier date) of the stone Buddha from Takht-i-Bāhī in Fig. 8.47, except that all the figures are seated rather than standing. They are all seated on a lotus pedestal with a broad pod, striations for the stamens and one row of flat, down-turned petals. The central image is a Bodhisattva (either Siddhārtha or Maitreya), probably in dhyāna mudra, like the other two inner Buddhas. The two outer Buddhas have their right hands raised to the chest and hidden under the full sling of the robe while their left hand, which rests over the left leg, holds a hem of the robe. The Bodhisattva, besides being in the center, is further emphasized by being flanked by three kneeling worshippers on each side. The dharmachakra mudrā of the main Buddha is very advanced, perhaps indicating a date ca. 400 or into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The identity of the main Buddha is not clear, but he is probably one of the five Buddhas. According to the Sahri Bahlōl four Buddhas from the main stone stupa, this Buddha from Takht-i-Bāhī would be Kāśyapa (with dharmachakra mudrā and with the central image, probably of Siddhartha, but possibly also Maitreya, in dhyāna mudrā).

Further, another similar arrangement as seen in Stupa B51 (but lacking the Bodhisattva element) occurs in Pratès Stupa P29 with four Buddhas being in dhyānāsana except the central one, which is a standing Buddha (Fig. 8.38d). This arrangement makes a distinction between standing and sitting postures, which would appear to be another important change. Here, however, it is difficult to fix any identity because we have no way to identify even one of the Buddhas, unless we assume the standing one in the center is Śākyamuni, then we can identify the others according to the system outlined above. This could also be a system applied to the five large stucco Buddhas on the east, south and west sides of the main stupa at Jaulian (Figs. 8.5a-c), if they are not additive and are a discrete set of five for each wall. However, there is equally the possibility that these five would be read chronologically in a lineal fashion.

b) A more evolved development of the 4 + 1 scheme may be seen in Stupa K at Pippala, where in one panel on the base of the stupa there are four smaller images (at least three Buddhas and perhaps the fourth was a Buddha) around a larger seated Buddha (Fig. 8.18b). Here the chronological lineal arrangement is abandoned in favor of one that suggests the four quarters of space and a circular arrangement around the larger Buddha, which would be considered the center. Similar arrangements can be seen in the bay-niche panels on the podium of the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu, but as far as we can tell from the ruined remains, these do not refer to the five Buddhas. A clear example occurs in Stupa P8 at Pratès in Haḍḍa (Fig. 8.38d) where there are three panels of five Buddhas, each panel with a central standing Buddha surrounded by four seated Buddhas. Since Pratès Stupa P8 has three of these panels on one side, the standing central Buddha in each could be a different Buddha, possibly either



the first three Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa), or the last three Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa (Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni, and Maitreya). The more complex arrangement in Stupa P8 suggests it is relatively later, perhaps ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> or mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.

It would seem that these arrangements of the 4 + 1 category are more developed than the other arrangements noted previously, and probably date later into the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Such arrangements can be seen in some stone stupas in China from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which, as noted earlier, may be associated with the *Lotus Sutra*.

*Group IV: late 5<sup>th</sup>- early 6<sup>th</sup> century (unified and further distinguished by size, mudrās and pedestals)*

The five relief sculptures in the tambour of the north wall of Bāmiyān Cave 51, possibly dating in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> to early 6<sup>th</sup> century period, present a unified five Buddhas distinguished by graduated size and, to a certain extent, by mudrās and pedestals (Fig. 8.46). The shift to using differing mudrās was beginning to occur in examples such as Stupa P8 at Pratès in Haḍḍa (Fig. 3.38c) where one Buddha in one panel has the dharmachakra mudrā, three others have the dhyāna mudrā and the central standing Buddha has the right hand raised to the chest and holding the hem of the robe in full sling mode. Also, Bāmiyān Cave 51 affords a prominence to the central Buddha, who is larger and has a more elaborate pedestal and mandorla. In Stupa P8 the prominence of the central image was achieved by virtue of the standing posture (not so successfully used in Pratès Stupa P29 in Fig. 8.38d where the standing image is too small and loses the dominance compared with the larger four seated Buddhas). The appearance of Vajrapāṇi in the Bāmiyān Cave 51 case affords one indication that the central Buddha is Śākyamuni. Though it is an old device, it was apparently still used to aid in the identification of Śākyamuni.

We see in Bāmiyān Cave 51 the trajectory turning in the direction of utilizing many elements to establish the identification of the five Buddhas. Probably the most important development is the usage of the differing mudrās, though they are not yet thoroughly developed to be successful. This is ultimately the method (besides color and pedestals) by which the tantric Mahāyāna five Buddhas became successfully identifiable. The group in Bāmiyān Cave 51 uses only two different mudrās, and it will take five different mudrās to achieve the clarity of the tantric Mahāyāna identifications. It would appear that the tantric Mahāyāna system of representing the five cosmic Buddhas had not yet fully evolved by ca. 500, judging from the remains presented here. It is clear that many stages of experimentation and various permutations in art of the representation of the five Buddhas was occurring during the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries, but it is not clear that these were solely (or even slightly) associated with any trend towards esoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism. What appears to have begun with the representation of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa appears to have gradually evolved, perhaps at some juncture merging or combining with the tantric Mahāyāna five cosmic Buddhas, which may have developed parallel or in tandem in ways that are not yet clear. We will have more to say about these developments below with respect to the five T'an-yao colossal image caves at Yün-kang in northeast China.

*D. Importance of Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 in Relation to the Five Buddha Iconography*

The five Buddha imagery of Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu brings an amazing clarity to the development of the five Buddha iconography. The four different examples that I have been able to identify in Cave 169 show in and of themselves an evolution of the thinking in this iconography that both assimilates and reflects back to what is happening in Gandhāra and Afghanistan, and which also projects forward with regard to China. The fact that the art of Cave 169 spans three or four decades of more or

less continual usage and making of imagery that can be chronologically determined with reasonable accuracy, including an important dated inscription of 424 (or 420), is invaluable evidence in a period which has few stable dated works among the art of Gandhāra, Afghanistan, Central Asia and China.

### 1. *Relation with Gandhāra and Afghanistan*

Chronologically, the four groups of five Buddhas in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 are as follows, as determined in the studies presented earlier in this volume:

#### a. *Group 16: five dhyānāsana Buddhas in a row (ca. 400 A.D.)*

This is an early form of the five Buddhas, basically equivalent to the arrangement seen on Haḍḍa Tapa Kalān Stupa TK 67 (Fig. 8.30b).

#### b. *Group 23: three dhyānāsana Buddhas plus two dhyānāsana Buddhas (the 3+2 arrangement) (ca. 410-415)*

This arrangement, though somewhat complicated by possible slight restoration, nevertheless is consonant with the developments seen in Gandhāra and Afghanistan in Stupas TK97 and TK100 at Tapa Kalān (Haḍḍa) (Figs. 8.30d, e).

#### c. *Group 20: five Buddhas, all individually portrayed; the central image is an ascetic Śākyamuni (ca. 415-420) (Figs. 6.57a, b)*

This group is a very interesting example of the stage of experimentation that strives for greater individual identity among the five Buddhas. In this case, the central image is definitely identifiable as the ascetic Śākyamuni. If we follow the system of identification outlined above for Stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai, then the alignment of Group 20 would be as follows:

center: Śākyamuni as ascetic

Śākyamuni's immediate right: Buddha Maitreya

Śākyamuni's 2<sup>nd</sup> to the right: Buddha Krakucchanda

Śākyamuni's 2<sup>nd</sup> to the left: Buddha Kanakamuni

Śākyamuni's immediate left: Buddha Kāśyapa

The scheme of Group 20, dating around 415-420, helps to establish the usage in Gandhāra and Afghanistan of the arrangement focusing on the importance of the central image of the group of five. We can see that phenomenon in Stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai (Figs. 8.33b, c) and also in Pratès Stupas P29 and P8 (Fig. 8.38d and c). This would indicate that such arrangements were probably current around 400 A.D. in Gandhāra and Afghanistan and can be seen in some stupas at Haḍḍa, of which P29 and P8 are surviving examples. Group 20 may also reflect the usage of the ascetic Śākyamuni as a clearly identifiable image and used in the central position of a set of Buddhas, as seen in the case of the seven Buddhas in Level B on the left side of the medium-sized stupa at Ali Masjid (Fig. 8.26b).

#### d. *Group 12: four Buddhas (two standing, two seated) with one seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya (the 4 + 1 arrangement) (ca. 425)*

When we come to Group 12, the painting of the five images (four Buddhas and the Bodhisattva Maitreya), we can see further clarification of the arrangement as used in Group 20. That is, inherent in the arrangement of Group 20 and in the row of five images on the southeast podium wall of Stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai, is the circumambulatory system that results in a virtual circle without a center and the

reading of the images around this virtual circumambulatory circle to be depicted in a lineal way starting with the central image of the line, which is made prominent by its central location. However, this system merely implies a straight line made into a circle; it does not take into account a center for the circle. It is a virtual circle, but a circle without a center taken into consideration. With Group 20 and Stupa B51 the arrangement is, so to speak, a “hidden” or “imaginary” circle.

The same is true of the Group 12 painting (Fig. 8.48), except that the circle is not hidden—the figures are clearly arranged into a circle (somewhat elongated, but nevertheless a circular form), and it is a circle which does not have an image in the center. So this arrangement is similar to that of Group 20 and of Stupa B51 at Bāgh Gai, but with more individualizing developments. In the case of the Group 12 painting, there are two standing Buddhas and two seated Buddhas and one seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya. If we take the circular form and move in the clockwise direction (of circumambulation) Group 12 presents the chronologically lineal alignment as follows: at Maitreya Bodhisattva’s right is standing Krakucchanda, next is the standing Kanakamuni, next is seated Kāśyapa, next is seated Śākyamuni and last is the cross-ankled seated Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 8.48). The images have been distinguished by being either standing or sitting (all are on lotus pedestals). The two first Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa are standing; the next three are seated. This is a variant of the 3 + 2 arrangement, but here it is 2 + 3 and the distinction is by posture. It is important to note that this system is relatively informative and easy to understand and that it is formed by chronologically forming the images around a circle, which implies space, but which does not clearly define that space in cosmic or directional terms. This is the final stage of the development of the five Buddha iconography in Pingling ssu Cave 169, which virtually ceased activity at the crumbling of the Western Ch’in kingdom and a devastating earthquake, both around 430 A.D.

## 2. In China

As noted earlier, literary records affirm the appearance of the five Buddhas in Chinese art from at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The five Buddhas appear, for example in the mandorla of the seated Buddha altar in Fig. 2.9, which was studied in Vol. II as a work ca. last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century probably under the Former Yen 前燕 (352-370) or Later Yen 後燕 (384-409) in the northeast.<sup>282</sup> These probably represent the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa and are likely to appear in the mandorla of either Maitreya or Śākyamuni as the main Buddha, though this has yet to be determined. Also, there are the famous five Buddhas made by Tai K’uei 戴逵 during the Eastern Chin 東晉 in the south and were important images at the great temple of the Wa-kuan ssu 瓦官寺 in the capital at Chien-k’ang 建康. These are known only from records, which do not mention the iconography of the images, but only mention they were made of lacquer and emitted miraculous light.<sup>283</sup>

In addition to the occurrences in Pingling ssu Cave 169 during the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century under the Western Ch’in in eastern Kansu, there are also other examples of the five Buddhas from central Kansu under the Northern Liang 北凉, who ruled that area from ca. 397 to 439 A.D., when the kingdom was defeated by the Northern Wei 北魏. The Buddhist art under the Northern Liang in central Kansu will be studied in detail in Vol. IV of this series, but it can be mentioned here that several examples of the five Buddhas occur in the cave temple art from the latter period of that dynasty and

<sup>282</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 351-354.

<sup>283</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 94-96.

that the iconography of the five Buddhas there presents yet another interesting facet to the study of this group. In Cave 8 at Ma-t'i ssu 馬蹄寺 (near Chang-yeh) on the upper part of the central pillar in that cave there are three rows of five Buddhas on each of the four sides. At T'ien-t'i shan 天梯山 (near Wu-wei) in Cave 18 a row of five niches, each with a dhyānāsana Buddha, appears as the top (third) level on each side of the central pillar (the lower two levels each have three niches, each with one dhyānāsana Buddha. In these instances, there appears to be elements of spatial alignment and of the consequential meaning and hierarchy of the levels, both of which involve more complex issues revolving around the iconography of the central pillar form, issues that will be further studied in Vol. IV.

However, in the northeast, historical circumstances attending the Northern Wei conquests of northern China and of Kansu, the transfer of a large population from Kansu to P'ing-ch'eng 平城, the capital of the Northern Wei (see map, Fig. 8.49), the devastating persecution of Buddhism of 446-452 A.D. under Emperor T'ai wu 太武帝 (Shih-tsu 世祖, T'o-pa 拓跋 燾) who ruled 424-452, the subsequent restoration under Emperor Wen-ch'eng 文成帝 (r. 452-465), and the appointment of the śramana T'an-yao 曇曜 (a Buddhist monk from Liang chou and refugee after the Northern Wei conquest of the area in 439) to be the superintendent of monks, led to one of the greatest of all Buddhist art monuments: the five colossal stone images of the caves at Yün-kang, opened under the direction of T'an-yao. This subject is of such pre-eminence in the history of Chinese Buddhist art, that it will be studied in stages throughout the subsequent volumes of this series. Here we will present several important new factors based on the studies presented in this book. These will contribute to the on-going discussion of this important topic, particularly concerning the identity of the five colossal Buddhas of the T'an-yao caves. These new factors will be briefly addressed in the following section.

### VIII. THE FIVE T'AN-YAO COLOSSAL IMAGE CAVES AT YÜN-KANG<sup>284</sup>

One of the great issues of early Buddhist art in China is the identity of the five colossal main images in the five caves at Yün-kang, petitioned by the śramaṇa T'an-yao, Superintendent of Monks, and opened by imperial order in the cliff west of the capital "early in the Ho-p'ing 和平 (460-465) era." The issues involving these five caves are many and complicated and will be considered in stages over the subsequent volumes of this series. They involve questions of history and politics, Buddhist conditions at the time, patronage, dating, textual evidences, doctrine, iconography, problems of construction and the order of carving, stylistic and content assessments, interpretations, and others. However, because the study presented here on the iconography of the five Buddhas in Gandhāra and Afghanistan and on the identification of the five Buddhas dating between ca. 400-425 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu brings relevant new materials to the discussion that have not been published before, the question of the system of arrangement and the individual identity of the five main images in the T'an-yao caves will be briefly put forth here and addressed in light of these findings.

<sup>284</sup> I have been working on the identity of the five colossal Buddhas of the T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang since the early 1980's. Many of the main conclusions of my theory, which will be stated in the following sections of this chapter, were put out from that time: 1) in a public lecture "The Universal Human and the Transcendent Being: the Buddha Image in China and Korea" given at the Los Angeles Co. Museum of Art, May 20, 1984 in conjunction with the exhibit *Light of Asia*; 2) as invited speaker for the Pre-Modern China Seminar at Harvard University, where I delivered a seminar lecture entitled "Concerning the Iconography of the 'T'an-yao' Caves at Yün-kang" on Nov. 4, 1985; and 3) on November 15, 1986 when I delivered a formal lecture entitled "The Iconography of the Primary Images in the T'an-yao Caves at Yün-kang," for the New England Conference of the Association for Asian Studies at Yale University.

*A. Layout and Brief Description of the Five T'an-yao Caves*

The five T'an-yao caves extend from east to west along the face of the stone cliff at the western end of the Yün-kang site at the Wu chou 武州 pass (Fig. 8.50a) west of the capital, P'ing-ch'eng 平城. These are numbered from east to west as Caves 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 (Figs. 8.50b, c). Cave 19 has two side shrines flanking the entrance: Caves 19A (eastern side) and 19B (western side). The layout of the main configuration of images in these caves is as follows:

Cave 16: Standing Buddha with abhaya mudrā and left hand lowered (Fig. 8.51 and color pl. XVII), touching thumb and third finger (H. 13.5 m; [44.29 ft.]). The figure stands on a lotus pedestal on the main (rear) wall and there are no attendant images. The surrounding walls have remains of thousand Buddha carvings and some image niches of modest size.<sup>285</sup> The robes of the main image are portrayed in a fashion emphasizing the heavy, parallel step-pleats of the outer robe, which falls low on the chest to expose the inner robe and its tie belt whose ends fall over the edge of the outer robe in the "Chinese style" and create a central vertical emphasis. The hems of the robes flare outward at the bottom and from the lowered left arm, creating a decorative hemline and a sense of movement generated from the image, whose body form loses emphasis by the increased interest in the covering of the robes. Repair holes can be seen in the lower half, but the upper parts are well preserved, showing the long oval face with somewhat serious expression and rather thick waves for the hair covering the head and uṣṇīṣa.

Cave 17: The main image of Cave 17 (H. 15.5 m; [50.85 ft.]) is a cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Fig. 8.52a). This image is universally considered to be Maitreya Bodhisattva. The tradition in China of Maitreya Bodhisattva in the cross-ankled posture had, by the 460's, been well established. The lower part of both arms are lost; and there is considerable surface damage and erosion to the image, which however, is extremely impressive, filling the whole chamber from floor to ceiling. Fig. 8.52b is a conjectural restoration and shows the position of the hands in a dharmachakra mudrā. The main figure is attended by two large Buddhas, the one in the large east wall niche is seated dhyānāsana, the one in the west wall niche is standing with right hand in the abhaya mudrā and left hand hanging down at the side (the hand is missing).

Cave 18: The main image of Cave 18 is a standing Buddha (H. 15.5 m; [50.85 ft.]) whose right lower arm, though broken, clearly hung down, probably with the right hand holding the hem of his robe (Figs. 8.53a, b). His left hand is raised and turned inward toward his chest as he loosely holds the bunched up hem of the outer robe (color pl. XVI). The outer robe on the upper portion has rows of small dhyānāsana Buddhas and a row of apapadukas and cloud forms. A standing Buddha image on a lotus pedestal with his right hand in the abhaya mudrā and left arm hanging down and holding the edge of his robe appears just below the left armpit. The robes are worn leaving the right shoulder bare. The hem of the outer robe lightly covers part of the right shoulder (the "open sling mode" with an edge showing like a cap over the top of the shoulder; Fig. 4.15, example "d"). On the chest, the hem of the under robe shows above the outer robe and has a delicate border of pearl motif. The robes of this

<sup>285</sup> Many of these niches, as is the case with all the T'an-yao caves, have the popular *Lotus Sutra* iconography of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna in the jeweled stupa. These are considered as somewhat later than the main image and to possibly be individual donations. However, the fact that they seem to be imbedded among the thousand Buddhas, like the image groups in the Group 24 panel of thousand Buddhas in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 5.3, 5.4a, b), lends a cohesive focus to the idea of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, an important supporting factor in the identification of the main images, as will be discussed below.



standing Buddha, unlike those of the standing Buddha of Cave 16, cling closely to the solid, rounded, well-revealed form of his body. The head of the main Buddha is well preserved and the hair is plain and close to the cranium. He stands on a lotus pedestal and the faint remains of a donor figure appear at each side of the pedestal (Fig. 8.53c). Two colossal Buddhas, one on the east wall and another on the west wall are major attendants. Both have the abhayā mudrā with the right hand; the left hand, well preserved in the east wall image, holds the hem of the robe in the lowered left hand (and this is probably the case with the west wall image as well, though it is somewhat ruined). Two large standing Bodhisattvas flank the main Buddha on the north wall. The eastern image holds up a lotus bud in the right hand and the lowered left hand is grasping some object (missing). The western image holds a lotus bud in the raised left hand; the right arm is lowered, but is missing the hand. Grouped above the Bodhisattvas are smaller figures of monks on each side (perhaps nine figures on each side, but some are worn out and some may be missing).

Cave 19: Cave 19 is the largest of the five caves (Fig. 8.54). The main image is seated (H. 16.8 m; [55.11 ft.]) with right hand in the abhayā mudrā (with gentle bend of the 4<sup>th</sup> finger) and left hand lying face up on his left leg. An edge of his robe lies over the palm of his open left hand, which appears rather like a vara mudrā. The outer robe of the main Buddha bares the right shoulder in an “open sling with shoulder cap” (variation “d” of the sling form of wearing the robe; see Fig. 4.15d). Most of the head is preserved except for the loss of the chin area. The head is long and the hair plain. Like the Buddha of Cave 18, this image has a pleasant smile on the face.

This colossal seated Buddha, usually thought to have been the first to be carved among the five, has no attendants. The walls are full of the thousand Buddhas in an early style (they are relatively large in size). Two prominent standing Buddhas high up on the south wall flank the open window. On the west side is Śākyamuni with his hand on the head of his son Rāhula. The standing Buddha on the east side of the window may be holding some object in his right hand, but this is not completely clear.

Cave 19A: This cave is relatively high and cannot be approached from ground level, unlike all the main five caves. The main image is a large Buddha with both legs pedant (bhadraśana). He makes the abhayā mudrā with the right hand and the left hand lies palm down on his left knee and simultaneously holds the hem of his robe. His attendants are two large standing Bodhisattvas. The one on the Buddha’s left holds a lotus bud in the right hand (at the chest); the left hand is lowered, but the hand is missing. The Bodhisattva at the Buddha’s right holds a fly whisk over his right shoulder and a large flask in his lowered left hand.

Cave 19B: This cave is also high and the main image is a pendant legged Buddha in abhayā mudrā with the right hand and his left hand lying face down on his left knee (without holding the end of the robe). The western wall of this cave has been severely damaged by the collapse of a part of the cliff which also destroyed the front (south) wall of the adjacent Cave 20. On the left side of the main Buddha of Cave 19B there remains a relatively small standing Bodhisattva, who is smaller in proportion compared with the attendant Bodhisattvas of Cave 19A. Both the Cave 19B main (pendant-legged) Buddha and the surviving attendant Bodhisattva are carved in the so-called “Chinese style”, similar to that of the Cave 16 Buddha.<sup>286</sup>

<sup>286</sup> However, the style of the Cave 19B images appears to be later than that of the Cave 16 main Buddha. This is one major reason why the collapse of the front wall of Cave 20, which also took down the outer corner of Cave 19B, did not occur prior to the making of Cave 16. This factor is important in refuting the existence of an “original plan” that may have had the present Cave 16 planned to be located west of Cave 20, as discussed by both Hang K’an (Hang, K’an 杭侃,



Cave 20: The front wall of Cave 20 has collapsed,<sup>287</sup> leaving the main seated Buddha exposed (H. 13.7 m; [44.9 ft.]), along with the left standing attendant Buddha (Fig. 8.55 and color pl. XV). The right attendant Buddha was also destroyed with the collapse of the wall, and only a trace of the lotus pedestal and feet remain. There are the remains of two standing Bodhisattvas closely flanking the main seated Buddha; they are not as large in proportion as the Bodhisattvas of Cave 19A and Cave 18, the other T'an-yao caves that have attendant Bodhisattvas of the main image.

The colossal main Buddha is seated in dhyāna mudrā with the right foot exposed from under his robe. He is sitting on a lotus pedestal, a few of whose petals still survive. The lotus pedestals of all the large images appear to rest on a single raised platform. A finely carved large mandorla survives mostly in tact on the wall behind. This Buddha wears his robes with the right shoulder bared but with the outer robe in the sling mode with shoulder cap, similar to the outer robe of both the Cave 18 and Cave 19 Buddhas, though in this case covering more of the shoulder. The patterning of folds and borders in the garments of this image is particularly ingenious, complex yet clear, and full of vigor and aesthetic interest. The broad-shouldered image imparts a powerful impression while the head projects an especially friendly countenance with a smiling expression. The hair is plain and the uṣṇīṣa is relatively large and bulbous.

From even this brief description, it is evident that each cave is quite distinct and individualistic, and each main image has a special form and character, as well as a different ensemble of attendants (or lack of attendants). We can clearly sense even today that this was a mammoth project in terms of scope, size and concept, not to speak of execution. These five colossal image caves appear to have been carefully and thoughtfully planned with possibly multiple levels of meaning and interpretation. In order to more fully understand these caves, it is critical that many issues be taken into consideration. However, there must be one essential, dominant, and over-riding purpose and thought to this plan. Though other ideas may factor in, these will be more than likely secondary to the over-riding, encompassing principle, which, in my view, must be Buddhist thought.

T'an-yao, the initiator and creator of these five colossal image caves, was a Buddhist monk originally trained in Liang chou (central Kansu) and was presumably brought with the 30,000 some families of the defeated people of Liang chou to P'ing ch'eng by the Northern Wei emperor T'ai-wu ti following his conquest of Liang chou and defeat of the Northern Liang in 439 A.D. With the horrendous persecution of Buddhism instigated by Emperor T'ai-wu from 446-452, even though he was repeatedly urged by his patron, Crown Prince Huang, to forsake his vows, he steadfastly refused. However, eventually he fled into the Chung shan mountains, hiding there for the six years of the persecution, until the Restoration in 452 under the new emperor, Wen-ch'eng.<sup>288</sup> Tan-yao's persistent and deterministic

"Yün-kang t'i 20 k'u hsi-pi t'an t'a ti shih chien wei T'an-yao wu-k'u tsui ch'u ti pu chü she chi ti 雲岡第20窟西壁坍塌的時間爲曇曜五窟最初的布局設計 (Yün-kang Cave 20's Western Wall Collapsing Time and T'an-yao's Five Caves Original Layout Plan), *Wen-wu*, 1994, No. 10, pp. 56-63) and M. Yoshimura (Yoshimura, Megumi 吉村怜, "Unkō Donyō gokutsu no daibutsu 雲岡曇曜五窟の大仏 (The Great Buddhas of the Five T'an-yao Caves at Yün-kang), *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, No. 295, (November, 2007), pp. 33-58).

<sup>287</sup> This is an issue that will be addressed at a later time. As noted in note 286 above, there is some recent controversy concerning the time of the collapsed wall and a possible "adjustment" of the plan concerning Cave 16. I do not consider this to be a major determining factor for the presently existing five T'an-yao caves.

<sup>288</sup> "While other śramana under the proscription of Buddhism quickly turned to lay occupations, seeking government service or taking up a trade or profession, T'an-yao was determined not to forsake his vows no matter how great the danger. Although prudence won in the end, his resistance to the entreaties of the Crown Prince attests to his strength of character and unshakable faith. As a layman it is said that he secretly kept all his religious vestments and

action shows the strength of his Buddhist commitment. So it would be characteristic for T'an-yao to consider Buddhism and its doctrines as the fundamental, pre-eminent principle for the making of these five colossal image caves in addition to many other possible collateral factors. Also, after the severe persecution of Buddhism by Emperor T'ai-wu, he was given the opportunity by the next emperor, Wen-ch'eng, who appointed T'an-yao to the important office of Śramaṇa Superintendent (Sha-men t'ung 沙門統) of Buddhism,<sup>289</sup> to establish these monumental cave temples with the purpose of resurrecting and renewing Buddhism and to rejuvenate and harmonize the Buddhist world of the Northern Wei.

Work on solving the identity of the main images of the five T'an-yao caves has been largely focused on trying to discern the identity of the five Buddhas with respect to the five Northern Wei emperors (including Crown Prince Huang, who never became emperor) from T'ai-tsu to Wen-ch'eng:

T'o-pa Kuei 拓跋珪 (Tao-wu ti 道武帝; T'ai-tsu 太祖) r. 386-409

T'o-pa Ssu 拓跋嗣 (Ming-yüan ti 明元帝; T'ai-tsung 太宗) r. 409-424

T'o-pa Tao 拓跋燾 (T'ai-wu ti 太武帝; Shih tsu 世祖) r. 424-452

Huang-t'ai-tzu Huang 皇太子晃 (Kung-tsung 恭宗; Nan-an wang 南安王)

Wen-ch'eng ti 文成帝; Kao-tsung 高宗 (r. 452-465)

Though many scholars believe this to be the case, it seems to me that T'an-yao would not have governed the layout of the five colossal image caves primarily on that basis. Rather, the essential governing principle for T'an-yao would mainly be based on Buddhism. The association with the five Northern Wei emperors is a factor to consider, though I think it is not the most important one. It will, however, be considered in a subsequent volume. Here I will limit my discussion to what I believe to be the overriding principle of arrangement and identification, that is, the Buddhist system of arrangement and the identity of the main image of each of the five main caves (not including Caves 19A and 19B at this time). The identity of the five main images has been considered by scholars to a certain extent, though as yet there is no unanimity, with the exception that Cave 17 is identified as Maitreya Bodhisattva. However, even though Maitreya Bodhisattva's identity is accepted, this does not immediately determine the identity of the other four Buddhas.

The following are the main points of scholars regarding the identity of the main images of the five T'an-yao caves:

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vessels and never parted from them for even a moment. Galen Eugene Sargent, "The Śramaṇa Superintendent T'an-yao and His Time," *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. 16, 1957, p. 378, translated from the Japanese of Z. Tsukamoto, *Shina bukkyōshi kenkyū: Hokugihen*, Kyoto, 1942.

<sup>289</sup> T'an-yao was the second monk to hold this position, after Shih-hsien 師賢, a monk from Chi-pin who had been in Liang chou under the Northern Liang and had also come to P'ing ch'eng following the 439 A.D. defeat of Northern Liang. *Ibid.*, p. 371. This is based on the records of the *Wei shu shih-lao chih* 魏書釋老誌 (Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism) by Wei Shou 魏收, trans. by L. Hurvitz in S. Mizuno and T. Nagahiro, *Unkō sekkutsu* (Yün-kang, the Buddhist Cave temples of the Fifth Century A.D. in North China), Kyoto, 16 vols., 1956, Vol. XVI, Supplement, p. 71: "The metropolitan śramaṇa Shih-hsien was originally of the seed of the kings (kṣatriya) of the land of Chi-pin. In his youth he had entered upon the Way and travelled to the land of Liang. When Liang was pacified he proceeded to the Capital. At the time of the suppression of the Law of Buddha, Shih-hsien ostensibly practiced medicine and returned to the laity, but he kept the Way and did not change. On the very day of the restoration he returned straightway to the life of a śramaṇa. For him and his fellows, five men in all, the Emperor personally shaved off the hair. Shih-hsien accordingly became Comptroller of Religious."

- 1) Matsumoto, Eiichi : first suggested that the Cave 18 main Buddha is Vairocana of the *Hua-yen ching*.<sup>290</sup>
- 2) Tsukamoto, Zenryū: first established the theory concerning the five T'an-yao caves and the five emperors of the Northern Wei from T'ai-tsu to Wen-ch'eng ti, and including Crown Prince Huang.<sup>291</sup>
- 2) Mizuno, Seiichi and Nagahiro, Toshio (authors and editors of the monumental series on Yün-kang: Cave 18 main Buddha is Śākyamuni according to Nagahiro (because of the probable ten great disciples in two groups on the back wall), who denied Matsumoto's theory, though Mizuno was open to the idea.<sup>292</sup>
- 3) Su Bai: without Buddhist consideration, the five caves were assigned west to east (Cave 20 to Cave 16 in a row) to the lineage of the Northern Wei emperors. He also grouped Caves 18, 19 and 20 as one sub-group and 16 and 17 as another.<sup>293</sup>
- 4) John Huntington: Cave 18 is Vairocana, Caves 17 and 19 are both Maitreya (represented as Bodhi-sattva in Cave 17 and as Buddha in Cave 19), and Caves 16 and 20 are both Amitabha (Cave 20 in Sukhāvati and Cave 16 in his "Raigo" i.e., "Coming Down."<sup>294</sup>
- 5) Hang K'an: without Buddhist consideration but utilizing the "chao-mu" 昭穆 system (hierarchical order for imperial tomb arrangement) in addition to the hypothetical changes brought about by the collapse of the front wall of Cave 20, he assigns the five caves to the Northern Wei emperors.<sup>295</sup>
- 6) M. Yoshimura: Cave 18 main Buddha is Vairocana.<sup>296</sup> In 2007, using the lineage of Northern Wei emperors as the primary ordering principle, he matches these with the Buddhas and further suggests that Cave 16 is Śākyamuni (equated with the last emperor Wen-ch'eng), Cave 17 is Maitreya Bodhi-sattva (equated with Crown Prince Huang), Cave 18 is Vairocana of the *Hua-yen ching*, Cave 19 is possibly Prabhūtaratna or Maitreya Buddha (suggested only tentatively), and Cave 20 is Amitāyus (because of the dhyāna mudrā).<sup>297</sup> Though Yoshimura presents possible identities for all five colossal Buddhas, the order of alignment depends on the linkage with the Northern Wei emperors, not on Buddhist doctrine or precedent.

To the best of my knowledge, none of these scholars has considered the five colossal Buddhas of the T'an-yao caves to be a distinct set of five Buddhas as known in the Buddhist texts or according to Buddhist tradition and doctrine, such as the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. Nor have they considered sufficiently the important precedence in Buddhist art, such as the evidences presented by the art of

<sup>290</sup> E. Matsumoto, (Chapter 3: "Kegonkyōju Roshana butsuzu") in *Tonkoga no Kenkyū*, Tokyo, 1937, pp. 291-315; see pp. 313-314 for reference to Cave 18 Buddha at Yün-kang. Here he suggests that the great Buddha of Cave 18, who has a 1,000 Buddha dharma robe carved in detail and stands on a lotus flower, is the Vairocana Buddha of the Hua-yen teaching.

<sup>291</sup> Z. Tsukamoto, *Shina Bukkyō shi kenkyū: Hōkūgi hen* (Studies in the History of Buddhism in China: The Northern Wei), Kyoto, 1942. Second edition: *Hoku chō bukkyō shi kenkyū* (Studies in the History of Buddhism in the Northern Dynasties). Tokyo, 1974.

<sup>292</sup> See Yoshimura (2007), p. 45.

<sup>293</sup> Su Pai, "Yün-kang shih-k'u fen ch'i shih lun," *K'ao-ku hsiieh-pao*, 1978, No. 1, also published in Su Bai's collected works: *Chung-kuo shih-k'u ssu yen-chiu*, Beijing, 1996, pp. 76-88; see pp. 76-77 for the T'an-yao caves.

<sup>294</sup> J. Huntington, "The Iconography and Iconology of the 'Tan Yao' Caves at Yungang," *Oriental Art*, Vol. XXXII, Summer, 1986, pp. 142-160.

<sup>295</sup> Hang K'an, "Yün-kang ti 20 k'u hsi-pi t'an t'a ti shih chien wei T'an-yao wu-k'u tsui ch'u ti pu chü she chi," (Yün-kang Cave 20's Western Wall Collapsing time and T'an-yao's Five Caves Original Layout Plan), *Wen-wu*, 1994, No. 10, pp. 56-63.

<sup>296</sup> He presents this theory in a series of articles from 1959, and further in 1983, 1999, 2003, etc. See summary of main points in Yoshimura (2007), pp. 44-46.

<sup>297</sup> Yoshimura (2007), pp. 52-53.

Gandhāra and Afghanistan or from Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu as well as from other caves and art in Kansu from the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In my opinion, these are extremely crucial considerations that should be taken into account along with all other evidences, especially because they reflect or are a major part of the Buddhist world more or less contemporary with or immediately preceding the making of the five T'an-yao caves. As we shall see later, the chronological considerations are an essential ingredient of the problem of the arrangement or system of organization as well as the identity question. If we now carefully consider the materials as discussed earlier in this chapter and consider them in relation to the five T'an-yao colossal images, I would judge the result to be as laid out below.

*B. New Theory of the System of Arrangement and Identity of the Main Images of the Five T'an-yao Caves*

It is clear from the studies presented in the preceding chapters that the presence of the sets of multiple Buddhas is current in the Buddhist art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan at least by the 4<sup>th</sup> century (some, such as the set of the seven Buddhas are known much earlier), and that among them there is ample evidence of the occurrence of the distinct set of five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, which are articulated in the *Buddhavarṇisa* (a text of the Pali canon) with specificity as a set of "five wise ones,"<sup>298</sup> and also in the *Bhadrakalpika* (a Mahāyāna sutra translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in 300 or 291) which describes the thousand Buddhas of this eon, including the first five Buddhas (Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni and Maitreya). We have also seen four different examples of the distinct set of five Buddhas in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu in eastern Kansu ranging in date from ca. 400-ca. 425.

At the same time, we have seen how the representation of the five Buddhas has been changing in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan during the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as in the Cave 169 representations. We have identified several of these changes and they are summarized in sections VII-XI above: from a row of five dhyanāsana Buddhas, to arrangements of 3 + 2 (or 2 + 3) and 4 + 1 configurations. In the Cave 169 chronology of the four different sets of five Buddhas, that of the Group 12 painting of ca. 425 is the most developed with the five Buddhas distinguished by their postures (two standing and three seated, the 2 + 3 arrangement) and by the identification of Maitreya Bodhisattva with four Buddhas (the 4 + 1) arrangement. Importantly, the five images of the Group 12 painting are arranged in a circle (Fig. 8.48).

The main images of the five T'an-yao caves comprise two standing Buddhas, two seated Buddhas and one seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva as follows:

Cave 16: standing Buddha

Cave 17: seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya

Cave 18: standing Buddha

Cave 19: seated Buddha

Cave 20: seated Buddha.

From our study presented earlier in this chapter, this configuration can be understood in terms of both a 2 + 3 (two standing and three seated images) and at the same time as a 4 + 1 type configuration (four Buddhas and one Bodhisattva Maitreya), examples of which appear in Gandhāra, Afghanistan and in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu. Though both of these systems are pertinent to the five T'an-yao caves,

<sup>298</sup> See full quote and discussion in Chapter 7, footnotes 142 and 143.

from the fact that each T'an-yao cave is a complex yet unique representational ensemble, we should also consider other relevant issues for determining the identities and the principle of the arrangement, including, at this juncture, some of the contents of these caves.

A significant factor to consider is the Buddhist texts of the time which may underlie these five colossal images and their caves, especially recognizing that T'an-yao himself, an ardent Buddhist, was also known as a translator of Buddhist texts.<sup>299</sup> It is likely that certain great Buddhist sutras and texts that are particularly popular or meaningful for the Chinese at that time and/or important in T'an-yao's view of Buddhism must be fundamentally involved. We also should consider T'an-yao's likely strong desire to lift up Buddhism after the severe persecution, as well as to demonstrate, especially theoretically, the superiority of Buddhism over the powerful Taoism and traditional Confucianism of the time. These important issues will be addressed more directly in a subsequent volume.

First, I will identify the standing Buddha of Cave 18, the centrally positioned cave among the row of five caves to be Vairocana Buddha of the important *Hua-yen sutra* (translated in 420 in the south by Buddhahadra and already seen in Chapter 6 to have been used in Group 6 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu in 424). This is strongly indicated by the appearance of multiple rows of small Buddhas on the robe, an unusual and striking feature that, as a number of prominent scholars already agree, pertains to Vairocana Buddha of the *Hua-yen sutra*.<sup>300</sup> Further, the standing Buddha of Cave 18 is accompanied by groups of monks and by two large standing Bodhisattvas (Fig. 8.53c), who are probably Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, the two great Bodhisattvas of the *Hua-yen sutra*.<sup>301</sup> Vairocana is the all-encompassing Buddha of the Dharmakāya.<sup>302</sup> In the T'an-yao caves, Vairocana is in the central cave with the four other colossal image caves in alignment with two on each side.

In the art of Gandhāra, Hadda and Kansu in China around this time period there are examples of a central standing (or seated) image with four others surrounding the central image. Stupa P8 at Pratès monastery in Hadda shows a standing Buddha in the center of the bay-niche together with four seated Buddhas at the four corners (Fig. 8.38c). This configuration is repeated in three panels along at least one side. Also, Stupa K at Pippala in Taxila shows a large seated Buddha surrounded by four smaller seated images (one mostly but not entirely ruined) in the four corners. All are in high relief and date ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 8.18b).<sup>303</sup> Stupas dating to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in China show similar configurations. Such an example, for instance, from a portion of a ruined stone stupa in the Wu-wei Museum in Liang chou (central Kansu) is probably datable to the period of the Northern Liang, probably ca. 430's (Fig. 8.56). It shows, in this case, a cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva in the center with two standing attendants inside the trabeated niche. To both sides are two dhyānāsana

<sup>299</sup> Translations that are attributed to T'an-yao include: *Ta-chi-i shen-chou ching* 大吉義神咒經 in 462 A.D. *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 21, (T 1335), pp. 567-580.

<sup>300</sup> This point was first suggested by E. Matsumoto and supported by M. Yoshimura and others.

<sup>301</sup> "... All the Buddha's company were great enlightening beings of the one vehicle, and there were as many of them as atoms in the Buddha fields, all imbued with the essence and action of Universally Good (Samantabhadra) and Manjushri ..." *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, A translation of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* by Thomas Cleary, 3 volumes, Boulder and London, 1984, Vol. I, p. 34. Cave 18 is the only cave among the five T'an-yao caves to have all members: monks, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, thus representing the one, comprehensive vehicle.

<sup>302</sup> The descriptions of Vairocana Buddha in the *Hua-yen ching* are incredibly vast. It presents a visionary cosmology describing this world system or universe as purified by the vows and deeds of Vairocana Buddha, the glorified or cosmic aspect of the historical Buddha. Vairocana is the great illuminator of all worlds and beings.

<sup>303</sup> See Chapter 8, section II.D.



images (probably all Buddhas) clearly arranged one to each of the four corners. These three pertinent examples from Taxila, Haḍḍa and central Kansu appear to express five individual images with a main one in the center and the other four aligned at the four corners, possibly forming a spatial or four-directional configuration. In these examples we may be on firm ground in actually associating the set of five with a spatial configuration, a development which would appear to have begun at least by ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in both Gandhāra and China.

On the basis of what we have seen in the study earlier in this chapter in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan and including here the example from Wu-wei in Kansu, the five T'an-yao caves appear to have progressed beyond the ca. 425 A.D. Group 12 wall painting in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (Figs. 7.41, 8.48). Further developments of the spatial configuration of a circle with a center seem to have appeared between ca. 425 (the date of the Cave 169 Group 12 painting) and the five T'an-yao caves in the 460's, that is, the developments which are manifest in the examples of Stupa K at Pippala in Taxila (Fig. 8.18b), in Pratès Stupa P8 in Haḍḍa (Fig. 8.38c), and in the miniature stone stupa in Wu-wei in central Kansu (Fig. 8.56).

T'an-yao was living in central Kansu (Northern Liang) prior to the 439 defeat of Northern Liang by the Northern Wei (when he was a little over 30 years old), and so was the monk Shih-hsien 師賢, who was from Chi-pin (Gandhāra) and was said to be T'an-yao's teacher. Both Shih-hsien and T'an-yao ended up in P'ing ch'eng after 439 with the massive diaspora of 30,000 families of various backgrounds who were moved by T'ai-Wu-ti from Liang chou to P'ing ch'eng in 439. Later, after the Restoration of Buddhism in 452, Shih-hsien became the first Superintendent of Buddhism; T'an-yao became the second to hold that office with the different name of Sha-men t'ung.

It is likely that, with this background, T'an-yao knew the current developments in Buddhist thought and art taking place in Gandhāra (the Chi-pin area) and it is not difficult to think that he was able to incorporate them into his plans for the five colossal image caves. This could include the thought that produced the art of Stupa K at Pippala and Stupa P8 at Pratès that clearly indicates a configuration of five Buddhas governed by the concept of a spatial circle (with four images indicating the four directions of space) with a center (with one image indicating the zenith/nadir or center of space). T'an-yao seems to have incorporated these concepts, which are clearly evident in the remains of the art, and uses the four direction Buddhas around the central Buddha, who is the all-encompassing Buddha, Vairocana, in the T'an-yao caves.

In observing the layout of the five T'an-yao caves, we see that Cave 16 is located at the eastern end of the row and Cave 20 is at the western end. Cave 16 has a solitary standing colossal Buddha without any attendants. The Buddha whose Buddha land is in the East direction is Akṣobhya; his Buddha land is called Abhirati. The sutra of Akṣobhya and his Buddha land is the *A-ch'u fo kuo ching* 阿閼佛國經 in two chüan. It was translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema by between 147 and 186 A.D. in Loyang and is one of the oldest of the "Pure Land" sutras.<sup>304</sup> This sutra does not state or suggest that there are special great Bodhisattvas in the Buddha land of Abhirati. All are Arhat-Bodhisattvas (Mahāsattva Bodhisattvas), but there are no special or great ones singled out and mentioned. Because the Buddha of Cave 16 is without attendants and is located in the East position among the five caves, we will identify the Buddha of Cave 16 to be Akṣobhya.

<sup>304</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 11, (T 313), pp. 751-764. Korean Catalogue K27. No Sanskrit version survives. Also see J. Nattier, "The Realm of Akṣobhya: A Missing Piece in the History of Pure Land Buddhism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2000, pp. 71-102.



The Buddha whose Buddha land is in the West is Amitāyus; his Buddha land is called Sukhāvati. The Buddha land of Amitābha/Amitāyus has two great Bodhisattvas who are specifically mentioned in four of the five known Amitābha/Sukhāvati sūtras current by mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>305</sup> In fact, the Cave 20 Buddha has two standing attendant Bodhisattvas which, though largely ruined, are nevertheless still clearly discernable, one at each side of the main Buddha (Fig. 8.55). Further, the dhyāna mudrā is associated with Amitāyus in China at this time, as is known from the inscribed Amitāyus Buddha of Group 6 dated 424 A.D. in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (Figs. 6.8a, b). The Cave 20 Buddha is also seated in the dhyāna mudrā. Because the main colossal Buddha of Cave 20 has two Bodhisattva attendants, has the dhyāna mudrā, and is located at the West direction, the Buddha of Cave 20 is identified here as Amitāyus.

Now we recognize that these two Buddhas, Akṣobhya and Amitāyus, are also two of the four direction Buddhas as mentioned in certain texts. If we look at the major texts of the time, two important texts that were translated into Chinese around 420 explicitly mention several times the “four Buddhas of the four directions” (ssu fang 四方) and both explicitly name these Buddhas. These two texts are the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra* (*Chin-kuang ming ching* 金光明經 translated by Dharmakṣema between 414-421 under the Northern Liang (397-439) in central Gansu,<sup>306</sup> and the other is a major visualization sūtra, the *Kuan-fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經 (T 643), probably translated by Buddhahadra at Chien-k’ang in the South in ca. 412-421 at the end of the Eastern Chin (317-420).<sup>307</sup> In both of these texts the listing of the Buddhas of the four directions is the same and also in the same directional order, namely, East (Akṣobhya), South (Ratnaketu), West (Amitāyus), and North (Wei-miao-sheng): In the *Chin-kuang-ming ching* (*Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*):

East direction [there is] A-ch’u 東方阿閼 (Akṣobhya)

South direction [there is] Pao-hsiang 南方寶相 (Ratnaketu)

West direction [there is] Wu-liang-shou 西方無量壽 (Amitāyus)

North direction [there is] Wei-miao-sheng 北方微妙聲 (Delicate and Wonderful Voice)<sup>308</sup>

In the *Kuan fo san-mei hai ching*, the same Buddhas in the same directional order are named along with the name of the Buddha land (kṣetra) of each:

In the East direction there is a country 東方有國. The country’s name is Miao-hsi (Subtle Blessings) 國名妙喜. This land has a Buddha called A-ch’u 彼土有佛號曰阿閼 ... The South direction has a country 是南方有國. The country’s name is Jih-kan-hsi (Surya Pramuditā) 國名日歡喜. The Buddha is called Pao-hsiang 佛號寶相 ... The West direction has a country 是西方有國. The country’s name is Ch’i-lo (Sukhāvati) 國名極樂. The Buddha is called Wu-liang-shou 佛號無量壽 ... The North direction has a country 是北方有國. The country’s name is Lien-hua-chuang-yen 國名蓮華莊嚴. The Buddha is called Wei-miao-sheng 佛號微妙聲...<sup>309</sup>

<sup>305</sup> See Appendix II, Nos. 2a, b, c, 12, and 17. Only No. 12 does not mention the two great Bodhisattvas. Also see Chapter 6 for the discussion of all these texts.

<sup>306</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 16, (T 663), pp. 335-359.

<sup>307</sup> See Chapter 4, section II.B.2.6) for further discussion of this text (in connection with the ten direction Buddhas).

<sup>308</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 16, (T 663), pp. 335c.17 and 345b.17. The translation of Wei-miao-sheng comes from M. W. DeVosser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, Leiden, 1935, p. 264.

<sup>309</sup> *Daizōkyō*, Vol. 15, (T 643), p. 689a, line 7-12.

Thus combining the observations concerning Cave 18 as Vairocana, the spatial configuration of four Buddhas around a central image as portrayed in the art from Gandhāra, Haḍḍa and Kansu, and the above important texts which name the Buddhas of the four directions, there results a configuration where four directional Buddhas appear around the central Buddha Vairocana as follows (Fig. 8.57-I):

Center: Vairocana  
 East: Akṣobhya  
 South: Ratnaketu  
 West: Amitāyus  
 North: Wei-miao-sheng.

This presents, after all, a configuration of five Buddhas, which can also be considered as a circular arrangement of four directional Buddhas around Vairocana at the center (Fig. 8.57-II). Taking all this into consideration, I think that T'an-yao was incorporating the four direction Buddhas with Vairocana to make the five Buddhas at Yün-kang.

There is, as we have seen, also the configuration of five Buddhas as the first five Buddhas of the thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa in the *Bhadrakalpika Sūtra*, a Mahāyāna sutra translated into Chinese in 300 (or 291) by Dharmarakṣa. This was clearly an important Mahāyāna sutra in China by 400 A.D. as evidenced by the numerous depictions of the thousand Buddhas in the early wall paintings in the cave temples of Kansu, including three examples in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu. We can recall that among the five T'an-yao caves, there is Maitreya Bodhisattva in Cave 17. Maitreya is the fifth of the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. Therefore, I think that the important system of the five Bhadrakalpa Buddhas was incorporated into the five T'an-yao caves. In fact, T'an-yao was using the spatial system of the five Buddha configuration, consisting of Vairocana and the four direction Buddhas, along with the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. Possibly also the five selected Northern Wei emperors may have played a role in the determination of this configuration (there will be more on this in a subsequent volume). Thus, if we combine the chronological system of the five Bhadrakalpa Buddhas in the order in which they appear in the sutras together with the spatial system of Vairocana with the four direction Buddhas, we see the following configuration (Fig. 8.57-III):

Center: Vairocana—Kṛakucchanda  
 East: Akṣobhya—Kanakamuni  
 South: Ratnaketu—Kāśyapa  
 West: Amitāyus—Śākyamuni  
 North: Wei-miao-sheng—Maitreya.

In this alignment, it is especially interesting to note that we can also associate the myriad small Buddhas on the Cave 18 Buddha's robe as possibly representing the 1,000 Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, appropriate for Kṛakucchanda as the first of the thousand Buddhas. Also, in the Group 12 painting in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 8.48), both Kṛakucchanda and Kanakamuni were standing and the remaining three were seated, as we see in the above arrangement of the T'an-yao caves.

This configuration certainly shows that each image in the T'an-yao caves has multiple representations. This way of understanding Buddhist images was already underway, as one can apprehend in the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan where time and again multiple meanings and identities appear to occur (particularly concerning the combining of directional focus together with sets of Buddhas,

such as seen at Mohrā Morādu in the sculptures around the drum of the dome), and, in texts such as the *Hua-yen Sutra*, where Vairocana can also be identified as Śākyamuni.<sup>310</sup> With the various levels of meaning inhering in the above scheme for the five T'an-yao caves, another important realization occurs with regard to Mahāyāna Buddhism: these three levels of meaning, namely, 1) Vairocana combined with 2) the four direction Buddhas combined with 3) the five Bhadrakalpa Buddhas, yield in essence the Three Bodies of the Buddha: Vairocana of the Dharmakāya, the four direction Buddhas and their Buddha lands of the Sambhogakāya, and the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa of the Nirmanakāya. The Mahāyāna doctrine of the Three Bodies of the Buddha was well known by the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century and T'an-yao could be masterfully incorporating it into the vast scheme of these five images that is based on the spatial configuration of the center with the circle of all space denoted by the four cardinal directions.

As mentioned earlier, we assigned the Buddha of Cave 16 to be Akṣobhya in the East and that of Cave 20 in the West to be Amitāyus. Now, for the position of South and North, we will consider as follows. Circumambulatory order around the spatial circle with a center and four cardinal directions in the order of East, South, West and North as seen in the texts noted above shows that the South precedes the West and the North precedes the East (Fig. 8.57, 8.58). Among the T'an-yao caves, when moving outward from the center (Cave 18) towards the East in the T'an-yao caves, Cave 17 precedes Cave 16 (Fig. 8.58). Similarly, when moving outward from the center towards the West, Cave 19 precedes Cave 20. This indicates that Cave 19 is in the South position. Thus we have among the T'an-yao caves, moving from East to West along the cliff, a complex linear order of East, North, Center, South and West.

In the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra* and the *Kuan-fo san-mei hai ching*, the Buddha of the South direction is Ratnaketu (Pao-hsiang 寶相, Treasure mark or Jewel mark). In later texts this Buddha's name becomes Ratnasambhava (Pao-sheng 寶生, Treasure Born or Jewel Born), the Buddha of the South in texts known in China from the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>311</sup> Similarly, the North direction is Wei-miao-sheng (微妙聲; Varāṣvara,<sup>312</sup> Delicate and Wonderful Voice) whose name in T'ang texts changes into T'ien-ku-yin 天鼓音 (Dundubhisvara, Heavenly Drum Sound)<sup>313</sup> and then in 8<sup>th</sup> century texts changes to Pu-k'ung-ch'eng-chiu 不空成就 who is Amoghasiddhi (All Accomplishing Wisdom) of the North direction.<sup>314</sup>

Therefore T'an-yao linearizes the spatial circle with a center into the line of caves in the cliff at Yün-kang in the following manner (Fig. 8.58):

Cave 16: Akṣobhya -- Kanakamuni  
 Cave 17: Wei-miao-sheng -- Maitreya  
 Cave 18: Vairocana -- Krakucchanda  
 Cave 19: Ratnaketu -- Kāśyapa  
 Cave 20: Amitāyus -- Śākyamuni

<sup>310</sup> For this point, see Yoshimura (2007), pp. 45-46.

<sup>311</sup> In the *Ho-pu Chin-kuang-ming ching* 合部金光明經 (Sui dynasty translation), the name Pao-hsiang (Ratnaketu) is still used. *Bukkyō Daijiten*, p. 4634b. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century in the *Chin-kang-ting yü-chia chung lüeh ch'u nien-sung ching* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 (abbrev. *Chin-kang-ting ching*, Japanese: *Kongōchōkyō*) translated in 723 by Vajrabodhi the characters Pao-sheng 寶生 are used for Ratnasambhava, who is in the South.

<sup>312</sup> DeVisser (1935), p. 264.

<sup>313</sup> In the *Chin-kuang-ming tsui-sheng-wang ching* 金光明最勝王經 translated by I-ching 義淨 in the T'ang Dynasty. *Bukkyō Daijiten*, p. 1987c.

<sup>314</sup> In the *Chin-kang-ting ching*, translated into Chinese in 723 by Vajrabodhi. *Ibid.*, p.1987c.

Though the ideas underlying the meaning and identity of the main images of the five T'an-yao caves were seen evolving in the art of Gandhāra, Afghanistan and Kansu in China, T'an-yao took these disparate and evolving concepts in the Buddhist texts and art and then combined them into a coherent, all-inclusive system of amazing complexity, completeness and clarity. The result actually sets the stage for further developments that appear in the subsequent centuries, as one major stream of Mahāyāna Buddhism fashions thought and practice into what we now know as esoteric or tantric Mahāyāna, which appeared fully developed in China in the late 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries with the five Dhyāni Buddhas (Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi) and the five earthly or Mānuṣi Buddhas (the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa). However, their fundamental ideas were taking shape already in the period of the 5<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, as we can apprehend in these grand and awe-inspiring five T'an-yao colossal image caves at Yün-kang. In their primary meaning these five caves combine several powerful systems into an expression of overpowering greatness and vastness incorporating the fundamental thought and practice of Buddhism into a set of magnificent, unsurpassed colossal images. Thus T'an-yao completed the whole Buddha-universe in this moment at Yün-kang for the people of the Northern Wei and, as recorded in the histories, "to be a crowning jewel for the whole world."

What appears here with the five T'an-yao caves is not a fully completed esoteric maṇḍala in terms of names and content as known since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but rather it appears to be a mixed combination, with three or four images of the esoteric (cosmic) form and at least one (Maitreya Bodhisattva in Cave 17) and possibly Kāśyapa/Ratnaketu in Cave 19, remaining primarily in the earthly form. It would appear that these Buddhas represent the actual status of the development of the esoteric forms and how they are being aligned with the exoteric mānuṣi (earthly) Buddha forms which are known earlier. By incorporating and synthesizing the systems of esoteric and exoteric, T'an-yao shows us a stage of thinking in the evolution of the esoteric or cosmic Buddha maṇḍala of the tantric Mahāyāna. Though not fully evolved as known by the 8<sup>th</sup> century in China, it is, however, developing in that direction and may represent a stage in that movement, which did not seem to develop further in China at this time. The final layout in this theory is as follows (See Fig. 8.58):

Cave 20	Cave 19	Cave 18	Cave 17	Cave 16
West	South	Center	North	East
Amitābha	Ratnaketu	Vairocana	Maitreya (Wei-miao-sheng)	Akṣobhya
(Śākyamuni)	(Kāśyapa)	(Kṛakucchanda)	Maitreya	(Kanakamuni)

Even though these caves accord with a system in their layout and identity, it is probably the case that with regard to worship, any order is acceptable, because each cave is a discrete entity as a Buddha land (realm). If, however, one were to follow the maṇḍala-circle order, the order would likely follow the directions as follows: Center (Cave 18), East (Cave 16), South (Cave 19), West (Cave 20), North (Cave 17), and this matches with the chronological lineage order of the first five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa: Kṛakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni, and Maitreya. It is a complex and involved system with many levels of meaning, showing the depth of thought given to these caves by T'an-yao.

Considering later developments in esoteric Buddhism, we can see that the scheme as presented here is reasonable for the period of the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. This system does not appear to have developed much in China after the T'an-yao caves. This fact also coincides with the drastic decline in Gandhāra around the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, growth in that region must have been considerably hampered or slowed down, possibly by the dispersal of the monk communities. There is probably a certain continuation of

esoteric thought and practice in the 6<sup>th</sup> century in various locales in India, Afghanistan and Kashmir, finally emerging in a stronger position by the 7<sup>th</sup> century and, in China, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century with the fully developed esoteric Buddhism that was re-introduced to China by Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra and others and by their translations into Chinese of the esoteric texts. We may be witnessing an intermediate stage in this development in the five T'an-yao caves. And there is more to come.

## CHAPTER NINE

### MAI-CHI SHAN: EARLY CAVES

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The site of the Mai-chi shan 麥積山 cave temples is about 45 km southeast of T'ien-shui 天水 city in southeastern Kansu (Maps 1.1, 1.2). It is situated in the western part of the Ch'in-ling shan 秦嶺山 mountain range. From ancient times Mai-chi shan has been extolled in literature as a beautiful place of forests, springs and mountains, especially noted for the "stack of wheat" shape of the mountain. It has long been considered one of the ten famous places of the Ch'in-chou 秦州 region. Fig. 9.1 shows a distant view of the "wheat-stack" shape of the mountain as seen during an approach from the city of T'ien-shui. It is an unusual, isolated, rocky mountain with steep vertical cliffs that are divided into eastern and western sectors for the Buddhist caves (Figs. 9.2a, b, color Pl. XVIII). The earliest caves, including Caves 78, 74, 169 and 69 studied here, occur in the western sector (Figs. 9.3a).

The site came to the attention of local scholars in the early 1940's, but it was not until the 1950's that systematic investigation work began. This was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution from 1965-1975, but, since then, the site has been documented and a number of books and articles published concerning the 194 caves at the site.<sup>1</sup> Attention is given here only to the earliest caves at Mai-chi shan, with a view to discussing the dating and iconographic factors and their sources.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the summary by Toh Kengo, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the area around Mai-chi shan was difficult for travel with problems from bandits and poor transportation. At the site itself there were few ladders or stairs still remaining to go up to the caves. This also meant Mai-chi shan escaped vandalism and treasure hunters. First to investigate was T'ien-shui's local historian, Mr. Feng Kuo-jui 馮國瑞 who went with six people on April 9, 1941. He investigated the geographical surroundings and copied the stone steles. Later in the same year he published *Mai-chi shan ku shih chi*. Mr. Fang classified and introduced the first record of the Mai-chi shan stone caves. He went again in 1945 and 1951 and published some results in *Wen-wu*. Official academic study began in 1952, led by Ch'ang Shu-hung, who organized a team which studied the site from Nov. 2-Dec. 1, 1952, investigating 157 caves (the photos and sketches are not yet published). In 1953 the Central Cultural Bureau organized a Mai-chi shan investigation team with 14 members. This group spent 32 days at Mai-chi shan from July 31-August 31, 1953. They numbered the 194 caves and had the "hanging path" made. The basic data obtained was published in *Wen-wu*, 1954, Nos. 2-6 and in a book published in 1954 (*Mai-chi shan shih-k'u*, Beijing, 1954). This stimulated interest in Japan as well. For example, Fukuyama Toshio, published in *Bijutsushi* No. 9, (July, 1953), an article where he cites Cave 114 as possibly dating ca. 431, noting the history of the time. Mr. Machida in *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, No. 35, (1958) tried to establish a chronology. In 1961 several groups went to investigate the site: The Kansu Province Museum, The Tun-huang Research Institute, The Central Art Institute (Art History Department), and the Chinese Art Institute. The Cultural Revolution in 1966 stopped all work. In 1972 the National Cultural Preservation Bureau ordered protection of the site (*Wen-wu* 1972.12, on protection of the site). In 1979 there was an archaeology conference (with an essay collection). There followed other articles in the 1980's on the chronology of Mai-chi shan and the periodization of the caves by various authors. Toh Kengo (Teng Chien-wu), "Bakusekizan sekkutsu no kenkyū to shoki sekkutsu ni kansuru ni san no mondai," (Mai-chi shan Stone Caves Research and Several Problems of the Early Period Stone Caves), in *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, in *Chūgoku sekkutsu*, Tokyo, 1987, pp. 256-258.

The first book in English on Mai-chi shan is the work of Michael Sullivan with the photographs of Dominique Darbois (*The Cave Temples of Maichishan*, 1969). It presents a history of the site (though information for the early period is limited) and interesting descriptions and commentary of the plates as well as a detailed account by Anil de Silva on the conditions and problems of photographing the site during a 1958 expedition to China, which was itself an extraordinary achievement



## II. EARLY HISTORY OF THE SITE

There are a number of different records about Mai-chi shan as well as many inscriptional fragments at the site. It seems clear from collating these records that the site was first established during the “Yao-Ch’in” 姚秦 period, that is, during the Later Ch’in 後秦 kingdom (386-418), ruled by the Yao 姚 clan (Ch’iang 羌 ethnic group) and centered in Ch’ang-an (Fig. 1.1). The following are four of these inscriptional materials, already discovered and noted by various Chinese scholars in their discussions of Mai-chi shan.

1) *The Southern Sung 南宋 Renovation Inscription*

This inscription is dated 1157 (Shao-hsing 紹興 27<sup>th</sup> year).<sup>2</sup> The stone inscription is located on the Eastern Cliff on the west side of the “Thousand Buddha Steps,” on the right wall of the entrance of steps going up to Cave 4, which is the Seven Buddha Hall. It reads:

The Mai-chi shan halls have been flourishingly transmitted. It began to be constructed (shih chien 始建) in Yao-Ch’in 姚秦 (i.e., Later Ch’in, 386-418) and completed in Yuan-Wei 元魏 (Northern Wei).<sup>3</sup> It has [now] passed through 700-some years and it is famous in the four chüns. In Shao-hsing 紹興 2<sup>nd</sup> year (cyclic year jen-tz’u 壬子; 1132), it was destroyed by the fires of war. By [Shao-hsing] 13<sup>th</sup> year (1143), when the region was peaceful, repairs and restorations were made. [In Shao-hsing] 27<sup>th</sup> year (1157), [cyclic year] ting-ch’ou 丁丑, the place was in good order and this ... great ... traces ... Yen Kuei-ts’ai 閻桂才 carved the stone recording this.<sup>4</sup>

2) *The Fang-yü sheng-lan 方輿勝覽*

The Southern Sung geography book, the *Fang-yü sheng-lan* in chüan 69, describes Mai-chi shan as follows:

“Mai-chi shan is located east of T’ien-shui hsien about 100-some *li*. [It has] the shape ... [like piled up wheat stack]. It is the crown of forests and springs of the land of Ch’in 秦. At the top is a temple constructed (chien 建) during the time of Yao-Ch’in (Later Ch’in 386-418).”<sup>5</sup>

In the same book, the section on temples further states:

“The Jui-ying yüan 瑞應院 is located at Mai-chi shan. Later Ch’in’s Yao Hsing 姚興 (r. 393-416) carved the mountain and made 1,000 cliffs and 10,000 images (hsiang 像), turning the cliff into halls. Thereupon [it became] Ch’in chou’s 秦州 place of scenic beauty. Also there is a Sui period (581-617) pagoda.”<sup>6</sup>

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for that early time. To this day the stunning photography of Dominique Darbois from this expedition remains among the best and most useful for study of the site.

<sup>2</sup> It was found in the summer of 1953 by the Mai-chi shan Investigation Team (Mai-chi shan k’an-ch’a t’uan 麥積山勘察團) led by Wu Tso-jen 吳作人.

<sup>3</sup> “Original Wei”, i.e., the T’o-pa Northern Wei, and including Eastern and Western Wei.

<sup>4</sup> Chin Wei-no, “Bakusekizan sekkutsu no sōken to sono geijutsujō no seika (The Birth of the Maichishan Grottoes and the Fruit of its Artistic Production), in *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, in *Chūgoku sekkutsu*, Tokyo, 1987, p. 176. Toh Kengo (1987), p. 257.

<sup>5</sup> From chüan 69, the mountain-water section. Toh Kengo (1987), p.259.

<sup>6</sup> Toh Kengo (1987), p. 259; Chin Wei-no (1987), pp. 176-177. Li Hsi-min, “Mai-chi shan shih-k’u shih-lüeh chi ch’i chiao-su yüan-liu,” (Brief History of the Mai-chi shan Stone Caves and Origin of its Sculpture), in *CKMSCC, Sculpture: Vol. 8* (Mai-chi shan shih-k’u chiao-su), 1988, p. 29.

3) *The Ming Dynasty Stele (Mai-chi shan k'ai-ch'u ch'ang-chu-ti liang pei* 麥積山開除常住地糧碑).

This stele, dated 1642 (Ch'ung-cheng 崇禎15<sup>th</sup> year), states:

"... Mai-chi shan is the crown of Ch'in land's forest and springs. As for its ancient [site] ... is historically connected to imperial constructions, which can be attested by stele records. From Yao-Ch'in (Later Ch'in) until now has been 1,300-some years and the incense fires have never stopped. The mountains and forests are deep and rich, and the pines and junipers make a dark forest. There are waterfalls between blue cliffs, and it is a place of natural, rare, and exquisite scenery ..."<sup>7</sup>

4) *The Sung Dynasty Szechwan Administrative Stele*  
(*Ssu-ch'uan chih chih shih ssu chi t'ien kung chü* 四川制置使司給田公據)

This stele is dated 1222 (Sung Chia-ting 嘉定 15<sup>th</sup> year). According to this stele, the so-called land distribution stele:

"... Among the group of winding mountains, one in the middle sticks out. One thousand niches are carved, 10,000 images presently remain. Up and down is 80,000 feet. In its midst there are three springs: Wen-shu, P'u-hsien, and Kuanyin's scared water. Myriad (10,000) people prayed [here] and all received what they desired. Beginning from the Eastern Chin (317-420) an imperial order bestowed the Wu-yu ssu 無憂寺 ... and granted fields to supply [the temple]. Continuously, seven kingdoms repeatedly repaired [the site]. By imperial order it was called Shih-yen ssu 石巖寺. By Great Sui imperial order it was called Ching-nien ssu 淨念寺. In Great T'ang it was called the Ying-chien (kan) ssu 應乾寺 by imperial order. This present dynasty in Ta-kuan 大觀 first year (1107) around the Aśoka pagoda at the peak 38 fragrant iris were planted ... The king changed the name to the Jui-ying ssu 瑞應寺 ..."<sup>8</sup>

From these stele and geography records, it seems clear that Mai-chi shan as a Buddhist site originated in the period of Yao Hsing (r. 393-416) of the Later Ch'in. Mai-chi shan is also known in the ancient Buddhist records, particularly in relation to the famous monk Hsüan-kao 玄高.<sup>9</sup> From his biography we learn that Hsüan-kao went to Western Ch'in and lived in seclusion at Mai-chi shan after leaving Ch'ang-an where he had studied with the famous monk Buddhahadra (who left Ch'ang-an in ca. 411 A.D.). There were also 100-some persons studying at the mountain who venerated Hsüan-kao's theory and received training in his method of meditation. At that time the famous sha-men, T'an-hung 曇弘, of Ch'ang-an, was also at Mai-chi shan, where "eminent monks of the land of Ch'in lived in seclusion." The biography explicitly states that "they all met together with Hsüan-kao and, because of the same karma, they became good friends. At this time Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an 乞伏熾磐 (r. 412-428) controlled the territory between Lung-hsi 隴西 and Liang 涼 land in the west. There was a foreign country's meditation master, T'an-wu-pi 曇無毘 (also known as T'an-ma-pi 曇摩毘), who came to this country and led his followers, establishing groups and instructing them in the method of meditation." Apparently, Hsüan-kao wished to lead his group to follow T'an-wu-pi and receive his teaching. However, "within 10 days, T'an-wu-pi changed his mind" (and left). Considering the events in Hsüan-kao's life as presented in the biography, he may have been at Mai-chi shan sometime in the period of 415-early

<sup>7</sup> Chin wei-no (1987), p. 177; Li Hsi-min (1988), p. 29, including a rubbing of the stele on p. 29. This stele is presently at the Mai-chi shan Institute.

<sup>8</sup> Chin Wei-no (1987), p. 177; Li Hsi-min (1988), p. 28, including a rubbing of the stele on p. 29; Toh Kengo (1987), p. 259. This stele is presently at the Mai-chi shan Institute.

<sup>9</sup> See translation of the *Kao-seng chuan* biography of Hsüan-kao in Chapter 1, section II.C.

420's.<sup>10</sup> The area came under the control of the Western Ch'in in 417 and remained so until the end of the reign of Chih-p'an in 428. Interestingly, a painting of T'an-wu-pi accompanied by a colophon with his name and title appears in the donor's wall paintings of Group 6 (the Amitāyus niche) dated 424 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (for the details, see Chapter 7, section I.A.2.b.i. and Figs. 7.12a, b).

There is still controversy over the earliest Buddhist images at Mai-chi shan and their dating. Most agree that Caves 78 and 74 are among the earliest, though there is dispute as to whether they are before or after the Buddhist Persecution period (446-452). These two important caves as well as the small niches Cave 169 and 69 will be discussed in detail here.

### III. CAVES 78 AND 74

Caves 78 and 74 are situated on the lower part of the western area of the cliff. Cave 78 is to the right (east) of Cave 74 and they are separated by the group of small caves 75, 76 and 77 (Fig. 9.3a, b). Both caves are relatively large and of similar size, shape and layout of images. The sculptures in each are all made of clay with a wooden center and are tightly attached to the wall of the cave. They both appear to be the oldest, major, fairly well preserved remains at Mai-chi shan. There is not, however, agreement among scholars on their dating. Some think they were originally executed before the Buddhist persecution of 446-452 instituted by T'ai-wu ti 太武帝 of the T'o-pa 拓跋 (Northern) Wei 魏 (with possible repairs done afterwards), while others think they were made after the persecution.<sup>11</sup>

#### A. General Description and Layout

Though these two caves are very similar in size, layout and image portrayal, there are some differences between them which tend to suggest that Cave 78 is likely to date a little earlier than Cave 74.

##### 1. Cave 78

When I first saw Cave 78 in June, 1992, I was amazed by its cavernous size and its three huge main images (about 11 feet high) seated close to each other. The cave resembles a large, square niche with a smoothly rounded ceiling. It is high and wide (H. 4.5 m [14.7 ft.]; W. 4.70 m [15.4 ft.]), but relatively shallow, so the viewer is positioned very close to the three large Buddha sculptures, which give the impression of being of overwhelming, nearly colossal size. The Buddha on the east (right) wall is largely destroyed; only part of the right arm and legs still survive (Fig. 9.6a). The surviving west wall

<sup>10</sup> Toh Kengo suggests that Hsüan-kao went to Mai-chi shan around 422 A.D. Toh Kengo (1987), pp. 261-262.

<sup>11</sup> Chin Wei-no appears to favor an early date, mainly on the reason that there was a second layer of wall paintings probably done as restoration after the Buddhist Persecution of 446-452. The under (lower) layer appears older, but the styles of each layer are not far apart in his view. Chin Wei-no (1987), p. 178. Toh Kengo suggests a dating in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century (Toh Kengo (1987), pp. 262-264. M. Kuno follows this later date in her article, "Chūgoku shoki sekkutsu to kanbutsu sanmai," (Chinese Early Period Stone Caves and Visualization Buddha Samādhi), *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, No. 176 (January, 1988), pp. 69-70. She provides several points for her dating of Caves 78 and 74 to middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century: the "flat" modeling style of the images which places them between the Group 7 Buddha in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and the Cave 20 Buddha of the T'an-yao caves at Yün-kang of ca. 460's, and the inscription on the pedestal of the main Buddha of Cave 78, which mentions the Ch'iu-ch'ih garrison, which was first established in 446. She does not, however, appear to consider that this inscription is probably a repair inscription which is a second layer added above an original layer below. The issue of this inscription will be addressed specifically below.

(left) Buddha (H. 3.18 m [10.43 ft.]) is in dhyānāsana (Fig. 9.4, 9.7). The Buddha of the back (main) wall (H. 3.25 m; [11.48 ft.]) has both arms held in an open posture (Figs. 9.4, 9.5a, color Pl. XIX). The left hand is missing (probably it either held the robe or was in the vara mudrā). Part of the right hand and forearm were found lying in the cave and have been re-attached (Figs. 9.5a, b). The fingers appear to have been straight, so the gesture is likely to have been the abhayā mudrā.<sup>12</sup>

The Buddha images sit directly on a low platform-pedestal that forms a connected U-shape along the back and side walls (Figs. 9.6a, b). There are no additional individual pedestals for each of the Buddhas, except that the hems of the drapery spread out to form a kind of area that seems to lift up the image from the flat surface of the platform. All three Buddhas appear connected on the single platform-pedestal, which has a recessed central section. The wooden slabs used in the construction of the platform are exposed in some places (Fig. 9.6a). The measurements are roughly as drawn in the on-site sketch in Fig. 9.6b. The resulting space in front of the altar platform is about 38" deep and 80" wide.

Though most all of the wall surface has lost its clay and painted surfacing, some of the mandorla survives around the left Buddha, especially on his left side (Fig. 9.7). It has two rows of dhyānāsana Buddhas. The on-site sketches in Figs. 9.8a-d give some example of the forms.

On the front of the platform-pedestal of the left (west) side Buddha, there remains a painting of two rows of male donors, eight in each row. They are dressed in baggy trousers, lapped-over coat (right side over left), soft hats and soft shoes (Figs. 9.10 a-c). Each figure has a colophon label with writing, which will be discussed further below. Among these, two have the following characters: Ch'iu-ch'ih chen 仇池鎮, the name of the military garrison south of T'ien-shui established by the Northern Wei during from 446 to 488.<sup>13</sup> One of the two also has the fragmentary inscription that includes the phrase: 十方諸佛時 "ten-direction various Buddhas period". According to investigators, there is another layer of wall paintings below, so this layer is believed to be part of a renovation, probably done after the restoration of Buddhism in 452 A.D. The figures are considered to be members of the Ch'iu-ch'ih 仇池 Ti 氏 ethnic group that was strong in that area.<sup>14</sup>

On the upper left corner of the central area of the platform pedestal on the back wall there are the remains of the head portion of two male figures who appear to be monks (Fig. 9.10d). They both have a distinctive hairline shape. Stylistically, they show a strong linear style with little or no modeling. They probably belong to the renovation period.

Originally, on each side of the Buddha of the back wall there was a standing attendant Bodhisattva. Now there are only loose fragments of these two Bodhisattvas. The one on the main Buddha's right is a Sui period image clearly brought in later (Fig. 9.7).<sup>15</sup> The one on the main Buddha's left, however, is an early work. It is detached from the wall and most likely is the remains of the original left attendant (Fig. 9.11). The figure holds a flower (lotus bud) in the left hand, which is raised and placed against the chest. The present height of this sculpture is 1.14 m [3.7 ft.].

<sup>12</sup> Cave 78 is said to have had repairs in the Northern Chou (557-581) and Sui (581-617) period. *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, p. 338.

<sup>13</sup> Chin Wei-no (1987), p. 178-179; Toh Kengo (1987), p. 262-263; *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, text description for fig. 13, p. 271; and text for fig. 6, p. 270.

<sup>14</sup> According to historical record, in 405 the chief of the Ch'iu-ch'ih Ti clan, Yang Sheng 楊盛 requested to surrender to Later Ch'in. Yao Hsing accepted and gave him titles. Even after Western Ch'in collapsed in 431 A.D. the head of the Ch'iu-ch'ih Ti clan at that time, Yang Nan-tang 楊難當, remained in Ch'in chou for another five years. *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, p. 271, text with fig. 13.

<sup>15</sup> See *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, Tokyo, 1987, fig. 9.

High on the back wall above the Bodhisattvas and placed at the curve of the back and sides, are two small niches (H. 60 cm [almost 2 ft.]; W. 70 cm [2.2 ft.]). The niches are shallow and squarish in shape with a rounded top and a molded rim around the top and sides (Figs. 9.12a, b). Perhaps these niches had a flat pointed arch above the niche, but that portion of the clay wall surface is now lost. The left (western) one contains a seated cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Fig. 9.12a) who appears to have had the arms raised in front of the chest in the teaching *mudrā* (one hand seems to cover over the other—an early form of the *dharmachakra mudrā* style known in Gandhāran sculpture, particularly of Afghanistan, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century). The feet in the X-crossed position are placed with the flat face of the feet (rather than the side of the feet) facing outwards. The Bodhisattva in the right (eastern) niche is a seated Bodhisattva in contemplative pose (Fig. 9.12b). Both forearms are missing, but it appears that the left hand may have been resting on the raised foot, and the right hand may have been raised up or forward. The legs are fairly well preserved and show a tightly rounded shape. A single, semi-circular loop of the drapery hangs over the raised right leg, and the drapery over the pendant left leg forms a squared shape. Both are attended by two small Bodhisattvas who stand at the outer edges of the niche.

The images in these two small niches are relatively well preserved. Both of these Bodhisattvas wear cylindrical shaped crowns and have a voluminous scarf which has the bold *Mai-chi shan* style with large zigzag hems all around. The ends form a double band with a wide groove in the center. The arc shape of the scarf ends imparts a sense of vigor to the image. The small standing attendant Bodhisattvas appear to be the same style as the larger Bodhisattvas, judging from those remaining in Cave 74 (Fig. 9.13). The left attendant of the contemplative Bodhisattva holds a vase in the lowered hand; the others are not clear.

## 2. Cave 74

Cave 74, located a few feet to the west of Cave 78 (Figs. 9.3a, b), has basically the same shape, size and compositional form as Cave 78. Most differences are in slight variations of size and some stylistic modifications, both of which suggest that Cave 74 may be slightly later in date. The wall surface shows rough chisel marks where the original plaster has fallen off, but more of the plaster surface with its fragments of the painted haloes of each figure survives in this cave than in Cave 78.<sup>16</sup>

The images of Cave 74 survive in relatively good condition, although there is some later repair, particularly to the head and hands of the main Buddha on the back wall (Fig. 9.13). The west side Buddha (Fig. 9.14) is 2.8 m [9.18 ft.] in height. The head of the east wall Buddha is lost. Each of the side wall seated Buddhas are *dhyānāsana*, but, like Cave 78, the main Buddha of the back wall had his hands in an open position, possibly with the *abhayā mudrā* with the right hand and holding an edge of the drapery with the left hand. Even though the hands have been repaired, it is possible that they reflect the original positions.

The two standing Bodhisattvas on the back wall are superb and well preserved remains. They, as well as the three Buddhas, are placed on the raised altar platform in the same manner as Cave 78; it surrounds the two sides and back in a U-shape. The Bodhisattvas are about the height of the seated Buddhas and each has the left hand raised to the chest holding a flower sprig (probably a lotus bud). The main Buddha's left Bodhisattva holds a vase in the lowered right hand, while the right Bodhisattva holds the edge of the scarf (Figs. 9.13, 9.14, 9.16a). Their impression is stately and tall. There are some

<sup>16</sup> Cave 74 is said to have had repairs in the Ching dynasty (1617-1912). *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, p. 337.

remains of paint, including some for the head halo behind both Bodhisattvas. As seen in the on-site sketch in Fig. 9.15b, these two Bodhisattvas each stand on the pod of a circular lotus pedestal which has a thick and rounded base, possibly originally having thin lotus petals which no longer survive.

Above the Bodhisattvas on each side of the back wall is a small niche, similar to Cave 78, except they are positioned lower and are a little larger in size (Figs. 9.17a, b). It seems as though it was realized that the small niches in Cave 78 were too high and too small for the viewer to see well, hence those in Cave 74 were lowered and slightly enlarged, though the iconography remained virtually the same. The west niche (facing, left) has a cross-ankled Bodhisattva and the eastern one a contemplative Bodhisattva. Each also has two attendant Bodhisattvas standing near the outside edge of each niche. Though somewhat ruined, the left attendant of the contemplative Bodhisattva can be seen to hold a long-necked vessel in the lowered left hand (Fig. 9.18a, color Pl. XX). Further, enough remains of the niche to see that above the flat rim of the niche there was painted a pointed arch with fine wavy parallel flame lines. Probably we may judge from this example that all these small niches in both Cave 78 and 74 had this kind of painted arch for the niche.

### B. *Image Style, Sources and Dating*

The sculptures of Caves 78 and 74 are truly extraordinary and must be counted among the great treasures of early Chinese Buddhist art. Despite some minor repairs, most of the images are intact and appear to be original. There is a slight difference in hand, but not in overall style between the images in these two caves. They have distinct features in their style which can be defined as characteristic of a typical Mai-chi shan regional style during the early period. The stylistic precedent set by these two caves continues with modifications and elaborations through much of the fifth century at Mai-chi shan.

#### 1. *Seated Buddhas*

The Buddhas are simultaneously powerful and refined (Figs. 9.5a, 9.7, 9.14). The form is highly abstract in its smooth shape; the linear detail is exquisite and complex. The body is characterized by a tall torso with high chest and sloping abdomen, but neither is distinguished by a muscular demarcation. The torso flows in one solid mass into the smooth mass of the legs which, merging with drapery, present an unusual trapezoidal shape which acts as a kind of base for the image. Where they appear, the feet are unusually flat and merge without notice into the sweeping lines of the legs. The shoulders are broad and the limbs pleasingly proportioned. The arms pull away from the shoulders and torso, thus broadening the dimension of the upper body, which is reinforced by the sense of bigness suggested by the large hands, especially of those held in the meditation mudrā (Fig. 9.7). All the fingers and the thumbs are large, round, long and stiff. This style of hand and mudrā relates to many seen in the small bronze images, particularly such as those in Figs. 2.5, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14a, 2.15, which range in date from ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> century to 437 A.D.

A cylindrical but delicately tapered neck rises rather abruptly from the high, expanded upper chest and holds a head of full, long proportions (Figs. 9.5a, 9.7, 9.14). The facial features and hair are superbly rendered with crisp, delicate lines and planes. Every feature of the head is outstanding in its artistry and beauty. The mouth, edged in a thin raised line, has an angular, sharply chiseled upper lip with distinctively drawn out ends, and a lower lip in crescent shape (Fig. 9.19). The nose is broad and straight, without nostrils. The eyes are slightly swelling with an eggshell delicacy to the thin upper lid.



The eye area has shallow contours, smooth, idealized planes between eyelid and brow, and thin, arching eyebrows. The hair is a tight, slightly raised plane incised with delicate parallel lines in an extremely refined wave pattern which also covers the big *uṣṇīṣa*. The pattern of the hair is very similar to that occurring in the Buddhas of Temple “I” and “J” at Toqquz-Sarai Tumshuk, dating ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5.37a). The ears have a wide upper rim with squared edges, a delicately edged cavity, and slightly flaring but plain, unmarked lobes. As seen from the side, the chin is rather sharp (Figs. 9.4, 9.21).

Stylistically, the face of the Cave 78 main Buddha, for example, in terms of shape, large features and specific shaping of the mouth, nose, eyes and hair, bears resemblance to the standing Buddha from Niche No.1 at Ping-ling ssu, dated in Chapter 3 to ca. 375-385 (Fig. 9.20). The Cave 78 Buddha, however, shows subtle differences by both sharpening and refining the linear aspects and clarifying the abstract shaping of the features and the forms, such as the neck and torso. The head of the Niche No. 1 image is larger proportion in relation to the body, and has a bolder emphasis on the large features and their abstract shaping. By contrast the Mai-chi shan Buddha heads appear refined and more settled.

Also, as noted by some scholars, the style of the Mai-chi shan Buddhas appears related to the large images of the T'an-yao caves of ca. 460's at Yün-kang. This is particularly clear in comparing the Mai-chi shan Cave 78 and 74 Buddhas with the face of the Cave 20 Buddha at Yün-kang (Fig. 8.55). It appears clear that the T'an-yao style of ca. 460's has a close relation to the works at Mai-chi shan like the Buddhas of Caves 78 and 74, but there is a definite difference which is critical to the dating of Caves 78 and 74. In shape of the head, the Cave 20 Buddha is similar, but in the heavy aspect of the face, the Cave 20 image relates more closely to the style of the sculptures of the 450's, which is unlike the lighter, basically more ephemeral style of Mai-chi shan Caves 78 and 74. Even though there is substance of shape, the forms and line have a transcendent spirit that lifts them above earthy weightiness. Although this may be considered a regional characteristic of Mai-chi shan, it can also be considered within the general chronological evolution of this whole period from ca. 400-460.

The drapery of the Cave 74 and 78 Buddhas is superbly intricate and subtle, yet, by the overall repetitive nature of the fold patterns, there is a unifying effect that reinforces the unitary, smooth flow of the shape. All of the Buddhas in these two caves wear the same style garments having a tightly smooth under robe and the outer robe only lightly covering the right shoulder and arm in the half sling fashion (Fig. 4.15-b). The pleats of the outer robe are formed by a dense parallel pattern of slightly raised and rather wide strips which have a central groove (Fig. 9.21). Each strip alternates with an incised line. It is not unlike the raised strip with medial incised line known in the early Kushana sculpture of Mathurā (Fig. 6.17c). A somewhat similar, though tighter, scheme appears in the Seiryōji Shaka Buddha sculpture said to be a copy of the King Udayana image which the Japanese monk Chōnen had made in Yang-chou in 985 A.D. (Fig. 9.22a, b) This image was studied in Vol. II and may possibly be considered as a later copy of the statue Kumārajīva is said to have brought to Ch'ang-an in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> The Mai-chi shan images of Caves 78 and 74 are lower, softer and more shallow, but there is a similarity in overall density. The equidistant spacing between the edges of the ribbon like strip and the incised central and alternating lines in the Caves 78 and 74 Buddhas creates not only a sense of complexity, but also of repetitive stability that actually contributes to the overall linear unity of the surface. In certain places there are intersections of the strips as though they are branching—a technique

<sup>17</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 441-445, figs. 2.73a-g.

which becomes more obvious in later examples, such as the 443 Maitreya bronze Buddha, which also has a loose network of raised strips with linear patterns (Fig. 3.19).

Over the upper left arm the folds end in points in the Buddhas of Cave 78, creating the “forked fold” motif described by earlier scholars like Benjamin Rowland when writing on Northern Wei and Yün-kang sculptures. The Cave 78 Buddha in Fig. 9.4 shows the mildness of this motif in comparison with stronger style used in the 443 Buddha in Fig. 3.19 and in the Cave 20 Buddha at Yün-kang in Fig. 8.55. The patterns also vary in a subtle way in the Cave 78 Buddha over each leg (Fig. 9.5a). Over the right leg the parallel fold strips are diagonally horizontal while over the left leg they make a sideways U-shaped composition. This creates intriguing asymmetry and nuances in the linear patterns. These patterning devices also appear in some Northern Wei stone sculptures of the 450’s and 460’s, such as seen in the stone seated Buddha dated 466 (formerly in the Yamaguchi collection) in Fig. 9.23 where, in the evolutionary developments that the Northern Wei inherited from the Buddhist art of the Kansu region, it is treated with less subtlety and the folds seem looser and have a bolder simplicity. In the Cave 78 Buddhas, the linear aspects are employed with consummate mastery in a style perfect for clay and stucco, but excessively laborious in stone.

The hem patterns are also worthy of special note in the Cave 78 Buddhas. Over the chest they appear as a stiffly curved flat band with a double incised line that ends in a connected U-loop below (Fig. 9.5a, 9.21). There are two, clearly marked hems that make a perpendicular break in the curve of the border on front of the chest. Around the base of the legs the hems are broad with the wide zigzag pattern characteristic of Mai-chi shan sculptures of the early period. Over the ankles the same pattern as seen over the chest appears, amplified in the main Buddha of each cave by the hem of the inner garment in a series of lapped, step-like levels of the folded hem.

The sources of this extraordinary image style of Cave 78 and 74 probably derive in great part from the sculpture of Gandhāra. For example, we can apprehend the quality of the smooth shape of the body covered by closely adhering garments that have a regularized patterning of parallel folds alternating thin creases, as seen in the dhyanāsana Buddha in the British Museum in Fig. 9.24a. Even the large hands with thick and stiff fingers are similar. The sense of tautly fluid movement in the dense field of folds that we witness in the Cave 78 and 74 Buddhas can be seen as inherent in the Gandhāran style, such as seen in the fragment of the lower part of the stone seated Buddha in Fig. 8.25j and also in the stone Buddhas discussed in Chapter 8, mostly from Sahrī Bahlōl, such as those in Figs. 8.25f, g, k. These Gandhāran images from the Peshawar area are probably datable around the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century, as discussed in Chapter 8. Further, the delicacy of the linear outlines and contours of the features of the faces in the Cave 78 Buddhas closely resemble those of some stucco heads from Gandhāra, such as the ones from Kālawān (Fig. 8.8g) and from Jauliān (Fig. 8.8h) in Taxila. The crisp, tight, delicate waves of the hair can be seen in the stucco heads from Small Temples “I” and “J” at Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk on the Northern Silk Road, dating as early as the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.28).<sup>18</sup>

Some elements in the Cave 78 and 74 Buddha ensemble match closely with elements in the bronze altar, probably from Hopei, in Fig. 2.11. These include the pointed knee shape and rather emphatic trapezoid shaping of the drapery from the knees to the pedestal. This altar was dated in Vol. II to ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century on independent grounds, including the flame patterns that relate to those on the Northern Yen (407-436) gold plaque (Fig. 2.21a).

<sup>18</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 502-505, 507-516.

## 2. *Standing Bodhisattvas*

The two large attendant Bodhisattvas of Caves 78 and 74 (only part of one remaining in Cave 78) are also major remains of early Chinese Buddhist art (Figs. 9.11, 9.14, 9.15a, 9.16a, b). They are handsome examples of the special Mai-chi shan variant. Quiet and frontal in stance with long, thin limbs and small face, they are enlivened by the twists of their long, mobile scarves and interesting arrangement of drapery. The tall, slender proportions of the figures are especially notable. Though much smaller in scale and more simplified, there is a comparable proportion in the attendant Bodhisattvas seen in the Wei Wen-lang stele dated 424 from near Ch'ang-an (Fig. 9.16c). With regard to the specific posture of the arms and flat but curved shape of the torso, there is remarkable similarity with the posture and form of the large standing Buddha of Group 18 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 4.7, 4.8), dated in Chapter 4 to ca. 400. This Buddha sculpture has long, slender arms and a rather flat but curved shape to the upper torso. The arms of the Cave 78 and 74 Bodhisattvas are positioned in a similar way with the right arm hanging down and the left arm bent up at an acute angle with the hand lying on the chest and lightly holding a flower (or the robe hem in the case of the Group 18 Buddha) between the thumb and index finger. The positioning is almost precisely the same in all these images. Further, the curved contours of the upper chest and the relatively flat yet fairly broad surface of the upper torso has a similar shaping and hard quality. It can also be remarked that the Group 18 Buddha, though only the "stone core" mainly remaining, shows a similar truncated shape to the neck as seen in the Mai-chi shan Cave 78 and 74 Buddhas.

The facial type of the Bodhisattvas of Caves 78 and 74 resembles that of the Buddhas in those caves, but has a more rounded rather than rectangular shape. The hair is portrayed in rather flat clusters pulled back from a center part. Fine incised lines indicate the individual strands. Long, flat loops of hair hang onto the shoulders where they are bound. The ends form three or four long pointed clusters across the shoulders. This hair arrangement is quite similar to that of the Group 17 Bodhisattva of ca. 400 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 4.26a). The Group 17 Bodhisattva is a large standing figure attending a large Buddha (now missing), but it can be noticed that both Group 18 and Group 17 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu are monumental in scale, as are the images of Cave 78 and 74 at Mai-chi shan.

The crowns surviving on the Bodhisattvas of Cave 74 have three sides, each with a round plaque with a rather flat, hanging, festoon from the center. The three-sided jewel crown is a type well known in the paintings at Kizil in Kucha by the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, as seen in the examples in Cave 38 of ca. third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.20b). It also occurs in the Asian Art Museum Kuanyin Bodhisattva of early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 9.16d), and in an early example in the wooden cross-ankled Bodhisattva from Cave 76 (Peacock Cave) at Kizil in Fig. 4.45a, dated in Vol. II to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> The pleated cloth (wide ribbons of the crown) is more subdued than seen in a similar motif in the Bodhisattva of Cave 17 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 4.26a, b), and the same can be noted with respect to the tassel type earrings, which also appear in the Group 6 Bodhisattvas dated 424 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 6.14a).

The ornaments of the Bodhisattvas of Caves 78 and 74 are quite simple and flat. The armbands and bracelets are the two-band type. The Bodhisattvas of Cave 74 have an added single semicircular jewel projecting from the top as clearly seen in Fig. 9.15a. This is a prevalent type seen also in Bodhisattvas of

<sup>19</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 695-696.

the Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 6 dated 424 (Fig. 6.14a). It also appears on the small bronze Bodhisattva in the Asian Art Museum in Fig. 9.16d, which was dated in Vol. II to ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The neck band with two layers and a pointed end occurs on all of these images as well. There is a slight difference between the Bodhisattva of Cave 78 (Fig. 9.11) and those of Cave 74 (Fig. 9.15a) which have increased sharpness and exaggerated curvature of the lower edge of the neckband. This suggests that the Cave 74 example is slightly later than the more subdued and broader rendering in the Cave 78 Bodhisattva, which is likely to be an earlier, less consciously decorative style. The style of the Asian Art Museum Bodhisattva appears to agree more with the Cave 74 image. This form of neckband seems to have been a prevalent form around the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in China.

Also typical of the Mai-chi shan style is the type of drapery on the Bodhisattvas. This is true not only with respect to the finely pleated overlay of the dhoti and wide sash ends that hang over the left leg, but most notably pertains to the long chest shawl which hangs diagonally across the left shoulder and drapes below the waist making a long, spreading, U-shaped loop (Figs. 9.14, 9.16a). This form is not unlike that of the scarf of the Group 17 Bodhisattva in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu in Figs. 4.26a, b, though the Group 17 Bodhisattva of ca. 400 A.D. is a simpler rendering. The spreading chest shawl occurs in the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa) in Group 6 dated 424 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 6.14a, c), though it does not have the same looped manner of draping low over the hip.

Broad zigzag hems are used in the shawls of the Cave 78 and Cave 74 Bodhisattvas. Such open, large zigzags are similar to the kind appearing in the ends of the scarf and in the folds of the sash between the legs in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century Asian Art Museum Kuanyin in Fig. 9.16d. The double split at the ends of the shawls appearing in the Cave 74 Bodhisattvas can be compared to the same motif in the wall painting of Maitreya Bodhisattva in Group 6 (dated 424) in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 7.1, 7.9a), as well as in the Bodhisattva painting in Kizil Cave 4 in Fig. 7.9b.

From the comparisons and details noted above, it appears that the Bodhisattva images of Caves 78 and 74 relate in many ways to other imagery in China and Central Asia (primarily Kizil) dating between ca. 400 and ca. 424 A.D. Certain differences between the Bodhisattvas of Cave 78 and those of Cave 74 suggest that Cave 74 probably was made slightly later than Cave 78. These include mainly the somewhat sharper and more developed patterning of the jewelry and drapery in the Cave 74 images.

### 3. *Mandorla and Halo Designs*

From the on-site sketches in Figs. 9.8a-d we can have some idea of the designs on the mandorla (including the head halo and part of the body halo) of the left (west) seated Buddha (Fig. 9.7). Though they are quite fragmentary and faint, there are elements which appear to relate to paintings in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu and to some of the small bronze Buddhas of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible that there has been some restoration, but on the other hand, the designs appear to have early elements.

The various bands or zones of the head halo are separated by a strip (red) with a series of single white dots that are somewhat separated. The innermost area has green vine motif, the next zone outward has a fancy rinceau floral-vine motif (Fig. 9.8a), followed by a zone with seated dhyānāsana Buddhas, possibly alternating in robe colors (one appears in white robe with black lines and one with red robe). Each is sitting on an oval lotus seat (Figs. 9.8a, b). Their robes are characterized by having a wide band for the collar fold and for the hems curving over and covering the hands. This motif of plain bands is a characteristic clearly notable in the wall painting of Groups 11 and 12 on the North Wall of Cave 169

at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 7.28, 7.36). The Group 11 and 12 paintings date to ca. 425 A.D. (see Chapter 7). However, the earlier form can be seen in the paintings of the thousand Buddhas and the three embedded panel of Group 24 in Cave 169, dated in Chapter 5 to ca. 400-410 (Figs. 5.4b, 5.8a5.14a, b).

The next zone shows some flame patterns (probably from the body halo) and then a row of dhyānāsana Buddhas each on a lotus pedestal (Fig. 9.8b). A long stem lotus bud flanks at least one of the Buddhas. One (Fig. 9.8c) has individual tongues of flames around the circular head halo. Such wavy, individually treated flames can also be seen in the bronze Buddha altar in Fig. 2.11 and in the shoulder flames of the Group 12 main Buddha in Fig. 7.36. Elaborate flame and/or cloud motifs in blue against a green background appear to decorate part of the outer part of the mandorla (Fig. 9.8d). These patterns, though not the same as seen in the mandorla of the Group 6 Amitāyus Buddha dated 424 in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 (Fig. 6.12b), nevertheless seem to come from a similar stage in the development of painted halo and mandorla designs. It offers yet another glimpse of the intricate and complex forms being used to represent the light of a Buddha's aura in the Buddhist art of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Such designs emerge in more solidified patterns in the wall paintings of the caves at Tun-huang and the later caves at Mai-chi shan.

In Cave 74, the outer circle of the head halo of both Bodhisattvas has very fine wavy parallel lines emulating flames (Figs. 9.15a, 9.16a, b, 9.17a, b). The same type of flame pattern appears in the arch motif above the rim of the small niches, as seen in the niche of the contemplative Bodhisattva in Cave 74 (Fig. 9.18a and color Pl. XX). This design most likely was also present in both the small niches of Cave 74 and 78, but most are missing. This style is related to the patterns in many of the outer rims of the halos in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, including those of Group 1 (Fig. 6.3), Group 6 (Figs. 6.8b, 6.11a, b, 6.12a, 6.14b), Group 7 (Fig. 7.20a), Group 9 (Fig. 7.25a, b), all dating between 400-425 A.D. The fact that the Mai-chi shan style is finer and more delicate is likely to be a regional (a different group of artists) rather than any great difference in time.

The appearance of a pearl motif with individual, separated pearls is somewhat unusual (Figs. 9.8a, b). The pearl motifs in the mandorlas of the images in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu tend to be packed in close to each other (Figs. 5.36, 5.53, 7.25b, 7.27a). However, the band of separated pearls is known in some early wall paintings at Kizil, such as seen in the arch above the prince image in Fig. 9.9 from Cave 118 (Cave of the Hippocampi), discussed in Vol. II as one of the earliest caves at Kizil, ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> They also appear in GK Cave 20 at Kumtura (Kucha) of ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 7.32),<sup>21</sup> and in the Wei Wen-lang stele of 424 from Yao hsien, near Ch'ang-an (Fig. 5.34c).

It appears that the large standing Bodhisattvas of both caves only have a round head halo and not a full mandorla, though it is possible that there was a slight indication of a mandorla for each Bodhisattva which now does not survive (Figs. 9.13, 9.16b). A mandorla with head and body halo remains for both the cross-ankled Bodhisattva and the contemplative Bodhisattva in the small niches of both Caves 78 and 74 (Fig. 9.12a, b and 9.17a, b).

#### 4. *Paintings on the Pedestal of the Main Buddha in Cave 78*

A painting (H. 55 cm [1.8 ft.] x W. 1.5 m [4.9 ft.]) of 16 standing male donors was discovered in 1965 on the front of the central part of the pedestal of the main Buddha of Cave 78 (Fig. 9.10a). Investigators

<sup>20</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 655-658.

<sup>21</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 708-714.



have noted, however, that this painting is not the lowest layer and there appears to be another, and therefore older painting underneath.<sup>22</sup> Some areas of the painting are broken and others are considerably faded, but in general the figures are discernable. The arrangement generally alternates figures of dark and light clothing. They wear baggy trousers bound at the ankles and a three-quarter length coat with tight sleeves. The coat is crossed diagonally (right over left) over the chest and is belted low below the waist. They wear a distinctive style hat which has a soft, rounded crown and a tight brim. A kerchief-like cloth hangs from the back of the hat, probably as protection from the sun. This may be the particular headgear of the Ch'iu-ch'ih 仇池 Ti 氏 ethnic minority prevalent in that area, especially since the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> Their soft, tight leather shoes have pointed but not upturned toes. All the men, aligned in two rows, are facing one direction (three-quarters to their left) as though in a procession from left to right towards the main Buddha in the back wall. They each hold the stem of a large lotus flower. The one in Fig. 9.10b is remarkably similar to (though less abstract than) the large lotus held by the contemplative Bodhisattva in the stone stele in Fig. 9.10e dated 411 from Ch'ang-an and now in the collection of the Sian Municipal Cultural Relics Association.<sup>24</sup>

Beside each figure there is a cartouche with black ink writing. In some instances, the characters can still be discerned. Among them two bear the characters Ch'iu-ch'ih chen 仇池鎮, the Ch'iu-ch'ih garrison. The Ch'iu-ch'ih military garrison was established south of T'ien-shui by the Northern Wei in 446 and it was abolished in 488. This strongly indicates that this painting was probably done after 446 and before 488. As suggested by some, more than likely this painting was done after the restoration of Buddhism in 452 following the 446-452 Buddhist persecution by Emperor T'ai-wu of the Northern Wei. This painting appears to show the male donors of a family or families and or of various groups of Ti men connected with the Ch'iu-ch'ih military garrison. Perhaps they were supporting repairs to the cave following the Buddhist persecution. This would naturally imply that there had been some damage to the cave, though it is difficult to determine the nature and extent of such possible damage.

The cartouche for the last figure in the upper row at the left (facing) has the remaining characters:

仇池鎮 ... 口(經)生王口口供養十方佛 時<sup>25</sup>

This inscription is particularly interesting for including the phrase "at the time of offering respect to the ten direction Buddhas." It is a written evidence for the popularity of the concept of the ten direction Buddhas in the Kansu area, in this case, probably dating shortly after ca. 452 A.D.

The on-site drawing made in 1992 in Fig. 9.10d shows part of what appear to be two monks, possibly making offerings. This painting fragment appears in the upper left corner of the pedestal under the main Buddha on the back wall, indicated in the drawing in Fig. 9.6a. These monks are somewhat differently portrayed from the monks in the wall paintings of Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, such as seen in the Group 6 and Group 12 examples (Figs. 7.12b, 7.14b, 7.39). The especially long, curved neck is a manner that is seen in paintings in Kansu that probably date after the Buddhist persecution, which may well be the case for these wall paintings on the pedestals in Cave 78 at Mai-chi shan. These monks were probably part of the procession of donors for the restoration of the cave.

<sup>22</sup> According to the record of investigation when this wall painting was being cleaned, this painting is not the lowest layer. Below it is thought that there is an older wall painting. *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, p. 271, text for fig. 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, p. 271, text for fig. 13.

<sup>24</sup> See Rhie (2002), pp. 427-429, figs. 2.69a-d.

<sup>25</sup> *Bakusekizan sekkutsu*, 1987, p. 338.



### 5. *Small Niches with the Cross-ankled and Contemplative Bodhisattvas*

The style of the small, nearly square, niches in both Caves 78 and 74 is somewhat similar to the niche forms seen in the 411 stone stele from Ch'ang-an in Fig. 9.10e and in the Wei Wen-lang stele in Fig. 9.16c. Though these two comparative examples are taller in general proportion, they have a similar narrow rim design, and, in the case of the 411 stele in Fig. 9.10e, rather flat rim similar to the one used in Cave 74 (Fig. 9.18a). The arch design used above the niche is also a feature of a small bronze relief found in Ch'ang-an which shows a *Lotus Sutra* configuration (Fig. 9.18b). This image was discussed in Vol. II as possibly dating ca. second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>26</sup> along with a similar bronze relief now in the Freer Gallery (Fig. 9.18c).<sup>27</sup> Another example appears in a second stone stele from Ch'ang-an dated 411.<sup>28</sup> Arched niches begin to be seen in the miniature stone stupas from Liang chou 涼州 (central and western Kansu) from around the mid-420's. The arched niche is not seen in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu. It seems likely that the Mai-chi shan arched niches are related to some developments seen in the Ch'ang-an area at least by ca. 411 A.D.

In the depiction of the cross-ankled Bodhisattva of Cave 78, the form appears quite fragile and delicate with slender limbs (Fig. 9.12a). Though somewhat worn out, it can be seen that the hands are held in front of the chest, that the feet are long, and the drapery rather flat over the front, curved tightly over the rounded legs, and ending with a horizontal hemline at ankle level. There is some degree of similarity with the cross-ankled Bodhisattva from Cave 76 at Kizil in Fig. 4.45a with regard to the slenderness and long-legged posture that has a vertical rather than a horizontal thrust. The Cave 78 image does not seem to have reached the degree of freedom and detail observable in the bronze cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya in Fig. 9.28a, which was discussed in Vol. II as dating ca. 430's along with another in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of the similar make (Fig. 8.8l).<sup>29</sup> Nor does it have the rounded limbs and tighter form evident in most of the cross-ankled Maitreya images of the miniature stone stupas of Liang chou of the 420's and 430's. The mudrā with both hands in front of the chest (an early form of the dharmachakra mudrā) is one of the mudrās known for Maitreya Bodhisattva in Gandhāran art along with the abhayā mudrā (as seen in the Kizil Cave 76 wooden image in Fig. 4.45a) and the dhyāna mudrā. The form of the dharmachakra mudrā apparently used in the Cave 78 image is more gentle and horizontal in posture than similar ones seen in the Group 12 Maitreya in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu of ca. 425 (Fig. 7.41), and in the stone stupa of Pai dated 434 A.D. (Fig. 9.18d) and the bronze Maitreya in Fig. 9.28a. None of these examples have the indication of a lion near the pedestal, such as appears in the cross-ankled Bodhisattva in Cave 169 at Mai-chi shan discussed below.

The contemplative Bodhisattva of Cave 78 has a similar delicate and refined style (Fig. 9.12b). Though the right and left forearms are missing, it seems the left hand may have been placed on the right foot lying across the left knee, and the right arm may have been raised towards the head. The head bends slightly towards the right, so perhaps the right hand was positioned near the head. The image sits on a stool of round shape (only the front half shown in high relief). The stool, covered with a cloth, is encircled around the center with a broad band with an incised line dividing it into two. The drapery lies closely over the right leg, revealing its stiff, rounded shape as it rests horizontally on the left thigh. This drapery then falls in the clean semi-circular swag with a bold hemline. The drapery

<sup>26</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 431.

<sup>27</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.71a, b.

<sup>28</sup> Rhie (2002), fig. 2.70b.

<sup>29</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 483-487 and figs. 2.97a, b.

fall over the pendant left leg makes a clear right angle as it comes from under the swag and forms the straight, horizontal hem across the left leg. U-shaped incised lines define the folds over the left leg. This complex scheme is clearly portrayed. In the Cave 74 contemplative Bodhisattva the scheme is similar but more boldly and powerfully executed (Fig. 9.18a). A new feature is a series of wide, folded pleats in the drapery falling from under the horizontal swag, a feature that is quite different from the example in Cave 78.

The Cave 74 contemplative Bodhisattva has more emphasis on the masses of scarves falling on both sides of the head, on a more powerful and longer upper torso, longer legs, and a wider circular seat. The impression is closer to the more developed style of the bronze Maitreya in Fig. 9.28a than to the contemplative Bodhisattva of Cave 78. These differences suggest an earlier dating for the Cave 78 images, perhaps closer to ca. 411, with the Cave 74 image representing a stage of development prior to the ca. 430's bronze Maitreya in Fig. 9.28a.

#### 6. *Dating of Caves 78 and 74*

On the question of the dating of Caves 78 and 74, scholars have suggested dates both before and after the Buddhist persecution of 446-452. Those dating these caves after 452 see their proximity to the T'an-yao cave images of ca. 460's and the dated sculptures of Northern Wei in the 450's and 460's. Others suggest that the caves could be earlier, but are not specific, primarily judging on the probable existence of an under-layer of wall paintings.<sup>30</sup>

From the discussions of the individual images above, the sculptures appear to fall between art dating ca. 400 or early 5<sup>th</sup> century on the one hand: similarities with the Niche No.1 Buddha at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 9.20), with the Ping-ling ssu Group 18 Buddha (Fig. 4.7) and Group 17 Bodhisattva (Fig. 4.26a), as well as with the bronze Buddha altar of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.11), and, on the other hand, a later group of images dating in the 420's: Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 6 dating 424 (Figs. 6.8b, 6.14b) and Group 12 dating ca. 425 (Figs. 6.14a and 7.36), and the Wei Wen-lang stele of 424 from near Ch'ang-an. With regard to the small niche design, it is most closely related to the niche forms seen in the 411 steles from Ch'ang-an.

The Mai-chi shan Cave 78 and 74 images have much less in common with the dated images of the 450's and 460's. In the 450's there is an increase in the mobile posture of the Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas, which show less abstract purity of line and nobility of form in favor of an earthy charm and fancier linear designs, as seen in Tun-huang Cave 259 (Fig. 7.54) and some stone Buddha steles from the Northern Wei in Shansi during the 450's (Fig. 5.38b). In fact, Mai-chi shan Caves 70 and 71 probably belong to this period. Certainly, by the 460's the heavy style of the Buddha of the stone stele dated 466 A.D. (Fig. 9.23) and the T'an-yao cave images (Figs. 8.52a-8.55), even though in some patterns they relate to Mai-chi shan, show an approach to form and line which is no longer the ethereal, abstract beauty of the Cave 78 and 74 style. A tough new vigor appears which is reflected in Mai-chi shan Cave 128, which, along with Cave 70 and 71 at Mai-chi shan, will be addressed in a later volume of this series that considers the Northern Wei period.

These factors indicate a reasonable dating for Cave 78 and 74 to a period ca. 400 -425, with a strong indication that they may date towards the early part. From stele inscriptions and various records, it can be determined that the site was founded in the Later Ch'in 後秦 period (386-418), probably in the

<sup>30</sup> Chin Wei-no (1987), p. 179. He considers that Caves 78 and 74 could be the time of Yao Hsing of Later Ch'in and Western Ch'in period.

earlier part (in the later part the kingdom was weakening and finding it difficult to defend its territories outside of Ch'ang-an). From the records of the Western Ch'in 西秦 presented in Chapter 1, the site was in the area controlled by the Western Ch'in during the reign of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an 乞伏熾磐 between ca. 417-428. If Caves 78 and 74 were opened around the early years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century under the Later Ch'in, then it is possible that these two caves may have existed when Hsüan-kao 玄高 and the other famous meditation masters came to Mai-chi shan probably sometime around 415-early 420's, as discussed in Chapter 1.

The evidence of possible restoration to Cave 78 (and presumably to Cave 74 at the same time) from the paintings on the pedestal of Cave 78, suggests that these caves may have been repaired after ca. 452. This complicates the assessment, but it would appear that most of the sculptures retain an originality that is consistent with sculptures of the period ca. 400. Thus, though there may have been some repairs, and possibly even some re-painting of the wall paintings, it would appear that they followed the original forms. Tentatively, then, these two caves are dated here to ca. 410, with Cave 78 being the earlier of the two by a few years. The most consistent comparisons come from the few remains that we still have from the Ch'ang-an area, which may be the main source for the style of these Mai-chi shan images.

### C. *Iconographic Considerations*

There are several interesting features concerning the arrangement of images in Caves 78 and 74. Compared with other sites in Kansu of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, Caves 78 and 74 appear to present a different layout. Unlike the caves of Tun-huang, or the central pillar caves of central Kansu at Wen-shu shan 文殊山, Chin-t'a ssu 金塔寺, Ma-t'i ssu 馬蹄寺, and others, these two caves at Mai-chi shan each appear as a huge niche with a single plan and apparently single iconographic scheme. This suggests that there could be a single textual source for the iconography being presented. Although Ping-ling ssu has several independent niches and groups created within Cave 169, none have the same kind of layout as these two caves at Mai-chi shan, each encompassing three very large main Buddhas, two standing Bodhisattvas and two small niches in the back wall. The two side Buddhas are in dhyānāsana and the main (central one), probably in the abhaya mudrā (perhaps indicating a teaching mudra). It may be that these are the Buddhas of the Three Times (Past, Present and Future) with Śākyamuni in the central position, though this is not certain here. From a study of the sutras translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425 as indicated in the earlier chapters of this book, there are many that mention the Buddhas of the Three Times. Further, we have seen that this iconographic theme existed in Gandhāra; particularly we can note the important inscriptions on Stupa D5 at Jauliān in Taxila in this respect (see pp. 393-395).

The appearance in both caves of the two small niches on the back wall with a cross-ankled Bodhisattva in the one at the left (west side) and a contemplative Bodhisattva at the right (east side) is iconographically of some significance. Several interpretations of these two niches seem possible. One, that the images are Maitreya Bodhisattva (west) and Siddhārtha in the first concentration (east). This configuration would suggest an emphasis on the Bodhisattva stages of both Maitreya and Śākyamuni. Another interpretation could be that both are Maitreya: the cross-ankled one representing Maitreya Bodhisattva teaching in Tuṣita Heaven; the contemplative one representing Maitreya in the pose of contemplation, possibly under the Dragon-flower (Lung-hua 龍華; Nāgapuṣpa) tree. A third interpretation could be surmised on the basis that most contemplative Bodhisattva images in Gandhāra from the Kushana period which hold a lotus or garland (wreath) are considered by scholars to be

Avalokiteśvara.<sup>31</sup> There is one clear relief from Gandhāra in Fig. 9.24f that shows the pair of Bodhisattvas flanking a teaching Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal. The Bodhisattva at the Buddha's left is a cross-ankled Bodhisattva Maitreya identified by holding the water bottle in his left hand. The contemplative Bodhisattva at the Buddha's right holds a lotus flower in the left hand, the usual identifying mark of Avalokiteśvara. However, without any remaining attribute in either of the contemplative Bodhisattvas in Caves 78 and 74, it is not definitive with regard to an identification as Kuanyin in these two cases.

If one considers the possibilities that visualization texts could be of some influence in the making of these two caves, then it is of some interest to note that Chü-ch'ü Ching-sheng 沮渠京聲 Duke of An-yang (安陽), a devout Buddhist and cousin of Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜, who was the ruler of the Northern Liang 北涼 kingdom in central and western Kansu, studied under a master in Khotan and acquired in Turfan two visualization sutras, one on Maitreya and one on Avalokiteśvara. Later, after the fall of Northern Liang in 439, he translated them into Chinese when he was in Chien-k'ang 建康 (Chien-yeh 建鄴) under the [Liu] Sung.<sup>32</sup> It could be that the two main images of the two niches in both Cave 78 and 74 represent these two Bodhisattvas that are the subject of two visualization sutras known earlier in Central Asia (Turfan). Even though the translations into Chinese were made around the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, interest in these two Bodhisattvas could well have been underway from earlier in the century. Certainly both Maitreya and Kuanyin are well known from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century in China through the translations of Dharmarakṣa, such as the *Lotus Sutra*. At present there is no definitive evidence for or against any of these three possible interpretations.

There is also the question of twin caves with similar iconography. Judging from later Northern Wei examples, one can think they are dedicated to father and mother. Pairs of caves in Kansu are known, like the two at Chin-t'a ssu, but they are not as similar to each other as Caves 78 and 74, which are practically identical. It seems that the idea of paired caves is present in some of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period caves in Kansu, but there is no evidence as yet as to the specific reason for them.

Further, it is interesting that a prototype for the Cave 78 and Cave 74 iconography may be seen in some steles from Gandhāra. One example is the so-called "smaller" stone stele from the site of

<sup>31</sup> Juhyung Rhi (2006), pp. 154, 166, 168. This includes Bodhisattvas other than in the contemplative pose as well. The contemplative pose is, however, open to other possibilities, including Mañjuśrī, though some differentiation can be made according to the object being held. Those that hold the flower or garland tend to be considered as Avalokiteśvara. *Ibid.*, pp. 159-163, 168.

A. Miyaji, in his study of the contemplative Bodhisattva in Gandhāran art notes that the cross-ankled and contemplative Bodhisattvas as symmetric pairs seem to somehow be special. Miyaji (1992), p. 335. They can be seen in various large reliefs and some cases show the cross-ankled Bodhisattva holding the water bottle (so is perhaps Maitreya) while the opposite image is a contemplative Bodhisattva holding a lotus (so is perhaps Avalokiteśvara), thus indicating a relation of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara. *Ibid.*, pp. 338, 340. Miyaji suggests that the contemplative image has the sense of "looking with compassion," and hence could be an appropriate pose for Avalokiteśvara. The combination of Maitreya suggests the prajñā aspect paired with the karuṇā aspect of Avalokiteśvara. "...concerning the Buddha triad or Great Miracle picture in Gandhāra, it seems to be that it was definite to have a cross-ankled Maitreya and a contemplative Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. These two fundamental functions of a Bodhisattva, namely, the character of searching for enlightenment and seeking bodhi, together with the characteristic of saving sentient beings and transforming the world, that is, the work of prajñā and karuṇā, perhaps each reflected in the cross-ankled and contemplative Bodhisattva." *Ibid.*, pp. 340-341.

<sup>32</sup> This information comes from the biography of Chü-ch'ü Ching-sheng in the CSTCC, chüan 14 (*Daizōkyō*, Vol. 55, (T 2145), p. 106b-c). The visualization sutra on Maitreya still survives: *Kuan Mi-lo p'u-sa shang-sheng Tou-shuai-t'ien ching* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, one chüan, (T 452), translated in 455 A.D. at the Chu-yüan ssu and Ting-lin ssu on Mt. Chung. Korean Catalogue, K194.

Mohammad-Nāri in the Peshawar region of Gandhāra in Fig. 9.24b. Though the setting is more elaborately treated with columns and balconies with figures (probably representing the heavenly realms, or the devas listening to the Buddha's teaching), the basic structure of Caves 78 and 74 can be seen to be similar to that of this Mohammad-Nāri stele. The stele shows a main Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal in the center on the main or primary level. This Buddha is teaching (in dharmacakra teaching mudrā) and is attended to two large standing Bodhisattvas, each separated by columns resembling of a kind of "side aisle" space (as in a temple) or shrine. At the level of the Buddha's head there are two small dhyānāsana Buddhas, each sitting on a lotus pedestal under an arch to left and right above the head of each large standing Bodhisattva. These may be two of the Buddhas of the Three Times, with the main teaching Buddha in the center being the third and most prominent. The top register above has three main elements. In the center are two reliefs, one in each of the two sections of the gable arch that is on the central axis above the main Buddha below. The gable reliefs appear to show two scenes from the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, which could indicate the identity of the main Buddha below as Śākyamuni. Though there is some damage in this area, the lower scene appears to be the stage of the Great Renunciation as Siddhārtha leaves the palace room with his sleeping wife, and the scene above is the stage of the Great Renunciation showing Siddhārtha leaving the palace on his horse. At each corner on the upper level of the stele is a rather elaborate shrine, each containing a major Bodhisattva figure with two standing attendants. The shrine at the left (facing) contains a cross-ankled Bodhisattva and the shrine at the right has a contemplative Bodhisattva. Balconies with devas similar to those appearing above the main Buddha also occur here. Though smaller than those with the Buddha, they nevertheless indicate a rather high status for these two Bodhisattvas, each with a separate shrine. At the bottom of this stele is the platform or pedestal base supporting the main scene. It contains a relief of the seven Buddhas with Maitreya, who appears at the far right of the line of standing Buddhas and slightly turns towards the donors. This central group of eight are flanked by a group of standing donors at each end, three on the right (facing) and four, including a child, on the left.

Caves 78 and 74 can be understood to have the same general plan of major images as seen in this stele, namely, a central Buddha in teaching mode accompanied by two dhyānāsana Buddhas and two large standing Bodhisattvas. Above are two niche-shrines, the one at the left containing a cross-ankled Bodhisattva and the one at the right having a contemplative Bodhisattva, both of which have two standing attendant Bodhisattvas. This degree of similarity, though not the same in all details, could indicate that these caves are based on known representations in the Gandhāra region. In Caves 78 and 74 it is as though the stele in Fig. 9.24b had been enlarged to fill the space of an individual cave representing a shrine, and at the same time the Buddhas of the Three Times were given much greater prominence.

If we consider the possible iconography of the Mohammad-Nāri stele, we may tentatively suggest that it might be presenting a tableau representing the *Lotus Sutra*. The elements of the Buddhas of the Three Times, the seven Buddhas and Maitreya all appear in the *Lotus Sutra*. Further, the figures in the two shrines in the upper corners could be the cross-ankled Maitreya, a Bodhisattva who is prominent in the *Lotus Sutra*, and one which is well established with the cross-ankled form in Gandhāra and especially in Central Asia by the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The contemplative Bodhisattva could be Avalokiteśvara, who figures in an important chapter in the *Lotus Sutra* (Chapter 25 in Kumārajīva's 406 A.D. translation). The contemplative Bodhisattva in the Mohammad-Nāri stele holds a garland (wreath) in the left hand (Fig. 9.24b). Holding the lotus or wreath is generally considered to be the symbol of Avalokiteśvara in



Gandhāran art in this period.<sup>33</sup> Though more study needs to be done on this issue, it can tentatively be suggested that both the Mohammad-Nāri stele and Caves 78 and 74 at Mai-chi shan are reflecting elements of the *Lotus Sutra*. They appear to present a selection of some major elements contained in the sutra, and not necessarily a particular scene from the sutra, such as was suggested in Chapter 4 of this book regarding Group 18 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu.<sup>34</sup>

Possibly re-enforcing the above tentative identifications, is the Gandhāran stone stele from Loṛiyān Tāngai now in the Calcutta Museum (Figs. 5.16 and 9.24c). Though not the precise layout of either the Mohammad-Nāri stele or that of Caves 78 and 74, it does show some elements that can be equated and perhaps be showing a different representation of the same general iconography of the *Lotus Sutra*. The basic scheme still presents a main Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal in the dharmachakra mudrā. Two dhyānāsana Buddhas appear on the upper register, each in a solitary shrine at each corner. The two Bodhisattvas that occupied this position in the Mohammad-Nāri stele in Fig. 9.24b are seen in the position of the two primary attendants to the teaching Buddha, but the cross-ankled Bodhisattva remains on the Buddha's right and the contemplative Bodhisattva at his left. Above the main teaching Buddha on the central axis, the two reliefs in the gable shrine show a standing Buddha at the top and two Buddhas seated side by side below. These two gable reliefs appear to show Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra*. The upper scene shows the standing Buddha Śākyamuni rising in the air to open the seven jewel stupa of Prabhūtaratna. The scene below reveals the two Buddhas, Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated together in the jeweled stupa of Prabhūtaratna. This scene, as noted in Chapter 4, later became the signature scene of the *Lotus Sutra* in Chinese Buddhist art. If the two dhyānāsana Buddhas in the upper corners are not particularly identifiable as two of the Buddhas of the Three Times, they could represent the "transformed bodies" of Śākyamuni who were brought by Śākyamuni from the ten directions to witness the opening of Prabhūtaratna's stupa (see Chapter 4 for translation of this portion of the *Lotus Sutra*). The Loṛiyān Tāngai stele has enough in common with the Mohammad Nāri stele to see their possible correspondences. Further, the identity of the contemplative Bodhisattva as Avalokiteśvara is substantiated by the Loṛiyān Tāngai example in which the contemplative Bodhisattva holds a lotus flower or small garland indicative of Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 9.24c).

The relative dating of the Mohammad-Nāri stele and the Loṛiyān Tāngai stele is still a difficult task. Two elements of the latter suggest it might be the earlier of the two: the usage of the garland and garland-bearer motif in the pedestal or base (a relatively early subject and not seen so much in the later art of Gandhāra), and the appearance of the canopy staff, which is also an early feature. The Mohammad-Nāri stele has all the characteristics of the fully developed stele representation and classic figural portrayal. A preliminary suggestion for the dates would be ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century for the Loṛiyān Tāngai stele and 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century for the Mohammad-Nāri stele.

The importance of Caves 78 and 74 at Mai-chi shan in regard to the iconography of the *Lotus Sutra* is that the elements of agreement between the two Gandhāran steles and the Chinese example of Mai-chi shan re-enforce each other and give some confidence to the suggestion of the *Lotus Sutra* identification. Also, we know that the *Lotus Sutra* was indeed a popular sutra in China by the 4<sup>th</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Juhuyung Rhi (2006), pp. 154, 159-161, 166, 168.

<sup>34</sup> M. Kuno has mentioned this Mohammad Nāri stele as being similar to the Caves 78 and 74 imagery at Mai-chi shan. She further suggests that this stele may be representing the Preface of the *Lotus Sutra*. In which case she interprets the cross-ankled Bodhisattva and contemplative Bodhisattva as representing Maitreya asking the reason for the marvelous appearance of the Buddha Śākyamuni, and Mañjuśrī giving the answer to the question. She judges, however, in this case that the contemplative Bodhisattva would be Maitreya. Kuno (1988), pp. 81-82.



century and certainly appears in the art by ca. 400 as indicated by the clear references to the *Lotus Sutra* in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (certainly in the paintings of Groups 24, 11 and 12 and probably in the Group 18 sculptures). This linkage gives greater solidity to the appearance of the *Lotus Sutra* in the art of Gandhāra and, in this case, can help to suggest such an iconographic identification by a coalescence of elements that seem to match in each of these cases (the Mohammad-Nāri small stele, the Lōriyān Tāngai stele and Caves 78 and 74 at Mai-chi shan). What is of great interest from the point of view of early Chinese Buddhist art is the possibility that the contemplative Bodhisattva pose could, at this time in China (ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century), be Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. Given the possibilities for this identification in the art of Gandhāra, and also in Swat, such as seen in these two examples: one from Nimogram (Fig. 9.24d) and the other from Chakdara (Fig. 9.24e), it is not reasonable not to consider that Avalokiteśvara could have been shown in this posture in China, at least for a limited time and perhaps in a limited region, such as Kansu. It is well known that the contemplative pose is pervasive among the later works of Gandhara from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries, and some cases clearly do not refer to any particular great Bodhisattva. With such a fluid, probably experimental situation regarding this particular posture, it probably took some time to be standardized and reserved for a particular Bodhisattva. We have to be aware that also in China the identity of the Bodhisattva with a contemplative pose may have undergone changes according to place, time and preferences. For example, the famous Prince statue from the South may have strongly influenced the Siddhārtha identity for this pose from a certain time in a certain region. Nevertheless, we should at this point keep an open mind concerning the early usage of this pose and the possibly of strong influence of Gandhāra. We need to be cognizant of possible differences in interpretation according to period and place, and for understanding this difficult problem we need to be as comprehensive as possible in searching for the clues.

#### IV. CAVES 169 AND 69

The niches which are called Caves 169 and 69 are located just west and very slightly lower than Cave 74 in the western sector (Fig. 9.3a). These two niches appear to be a pair (Fig. 9.25). They are about the same size and are joined together by a pair of coiled dragons in high relief. The long bodies of the dragons form the rounded rims of the two niches (Figs. 9.25 and 9.30). The feet of the dragons cross and intertwine below. Above the dragon there is an incised heraldic “fleur-de-lis” type design, and above that a small shallow Buddha niche which still has the ruined remains of a dhyānāsana Buddha (Figs. 9.25, 9.30).

The entwined dragon is a rare motif at Mi-chi shan and is a unique example for this period. The dragon representation is known in niches at Chin-t’a ssu 金塔寺 (East and West caves) near Chang-yeh 張掖 in central Kansu, but none are the entwined dragons linking two niches as in this case.<sup>35</sup> The dragon body rim of the niche is also seen in the Wei Wen-lang 魏文朗 stele dated 424, where the upper bodies of two dragons are twisted together at the center of the niche, which contains two seated images (at least one a Buddha).<sup>36</sup> Chin Wei no suggests that this pair of niches may be related to the Southern Yen 南燕, with which a pair of entwined dragons is associated.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See Rhie (2002), fig. 2.57c.

<sup>36</sup> See Rhie (2002), figs. 2.83a, b.

<sup>37</sup> It is suggested by Chin Wei-no that there may be some association with the Southern Yen, a kingdom in the Hopei and Shantung area established by Mu-Jung Te 慕容德 in 398 A.D. and demised under the second ruler, Mu-Jung

The niches have a squared shape with slightly inclined sides and slightly rounded edges and ceiling similar to the small niches in Caves 78 and 74. Above the molded rim there is a rather narrow arch in low relief, relatively close to the style of the arch in the small niches of Caves 78 and 74 as well as the arches mentioned earlier in relation to those in Caves 78 and 74, such as the examples from Ch'ang-an in Fig.9.18b. Cave 169 is more damaged than Cave 69, but Cave 69 has been more repaired (the two standing Bodhisattvas are considered to be Western Wei (535-557) repair).

These two niches may represent Maitreya Bodhisattva and Maitreya Buddha as a pair, or possibly Maitreya Bodhisattva and Śākyamuni Buddha. The former is more likely and could indicate Maitreya Bodhisattva in Tuṣita Heaven and the seated Buddha (probably in teaching mode) as the Buddha Maitreya.<sup>38</sup> The small seated Buddha between the niches is possibly the single remains of a scheme of seated Buddhas, such as the ten direction Buddhas or the seven Buddhas, or possibly merely one Śākyamuni Buddha, but this is not certain.

#### A. Cave 169

Cave 169 is the left (western side) of the pair. On the back wall is a cross-ankled Bodhisattva, probably Maitreya, who is the main image of the niche (H. 80 cm [2.62 ft.]). A standing Bodhisattva attendant remains on the right (east) wall (Fig. 9.26). The left (west) wall is mostly destroyed, but no doubt there was originally a standing Bodhisattva attendant as well. All the images are in high relief and attached to the wall. The main Bodhisattva sits with a free and open posture on a large rounded stool-like seat shown in high relief as semi-circular (Fig. 9.27a). One of the two standing lions which originally flanked the seat still remains at the Bodhisattva's left side. The lion has a rather small and well sculpted face with sensitive modeling, including a tongue hanging from the open mouth and finely combed lines for the mane (Fig. 9.27a).

Ch'ao 慕容超 in 410 when it was destroyed by Eastern Chin. There is a miraculous story associated with the auspicious vision of two dragons, one white and one black with their necks entwined as beheld in a vision by an ancestral leader of the Former Yen. There appears to have been some relation of the royal women of the Southern Yen with Mai-chi shan, particularly with respect to Cave 76. There is a two line inscription in Cave 76 mentioning the Southern Yen and there are relief sculptures in the cave of women donors, who may be the Southern Yen royal women who were in exile in this area in ca. 407. For the long and involved story behind this, see Chin Wei-no (1987), pp. 180-183. Because of these apparent associations of the Southern Yen royal women with Cave 76, and several other caves at Mai-chi shan as well, Chin Wei-no thinks the dragons between Caves 169 and 69 could also be related to the Southern Yen auspicious vision. Cave 76 is located between Cave 78 and 74. It is a small cave, about one meter square. It has not been discussed here because it is heavily repaired in the Northern Wei period.

<sup>38</sup> Maitreya is mentioned in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra* (translated by Lokakṣema, 179 A.D.) and also in the *Sukhāvātīyūha Sūtra* (*Wu-liang shou ching*, probably translated in 420 A.D. by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün), but it is in the *Lotus Sutra* (translated in 286 by Dharmarakṣa) that Maitreya is introduced in a significant way. He is mentioned as being in the Tuṣita Heaven and that believers would be reborn in Tuṣita Heaven in the presence of Maitreya. The idea of "going to" Tuṣita Heaven was current in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (especially as propagated by Tao-an) and early 5<sup>th</sup> century. For example the Chinese monk T'an-wu-chieh who travelled to Gandhāra and India in the early 420's, had a teacher when he was staying in Chi-pin (Gandhāra/Haḍḍa) that was famous for having "visited" Maitreya in Tuṣita Heaven (see translation of biography of T'an-wu-chieh above in Chapter 6, Section II.A.2.c.16, a). Several texts on Maitreya were also translated by Dharmarakṣa: *Mi-lo ch'eng-fo ching* 彌勒成佛經 (in 303 A.D.), the *Mi-lo p'u-sa so wen pen yüan ching* 彌勒菩薩所問本願經 (T 349) also in 303, and the *Mi-lo Hsia-sheng ching* 彌勒下生經 (T 453) which describes Ketumati, Maitreya's earthly paradise. Some of the Āgama literature translated into Chinese in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century speak of Maitreya as the Future Buddha and describe his earthly realm (Ketumati): *Tseng i a-han ching* chapters 13 and 19 and 49, and the *Ch'ang a-han ching*, chapter 6. Kumārajīva translated three texts on Maitreya: *Mi-lo hsia sheng ch'eng fo ching* 彌勒下生成佛經 (T 454), *Mi-lo ta ch'eng fo ching* 彌勒大成佛經 (T 456), translated in 402, and a third that is lost.

The lion accompanying Maitreya is an interesting feature. A pair of lions also accompany the large cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva in Cave 275 at Tun-huang. It would appear to indicate the royal status, similar to the lion seen in the thrones of Śākyamuni Buddha from the earliest times of Buddha imagery in India. Usually only Śākyamuni and Maitreya have this kind of throne. A relief, now in pieces, from the site of Nimogram in Swat (Gandhāra) shows a cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva with the remains of two lions at the side of the throne (Figs. 9.28c). Maitreya holds the identifying water vessel in his left hand and makes the *abhayā mudrā* with his right hand. This relief, which probably dates ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century, is particularly important for showing this form of Maitreya in the setting of Tuṣita Heaven, as indicated by the palace components and by the balconies with celestial maidens. This relief clearly shows that the lion pedestal is part of the Maitreya iconography in Tuṣita Heaven, which is likely to be the case for this Maitreya in Mai-chi shan Cave 169 as well. The Mai-chi shan image is a rare early example of this iconography in China.

This cross-ankled Maitreya image in Cave 169 at Mai-chi shan is an unusual and pleasingly animated image. It is distinctive for its long, very slender limbs, broad upper chest and shoulders, and triangular shaped upper torso with some rather clear muscular shaping. The head is proportionately small and has a sweetly smiling face with delicate features and long eyes (Fig. 9.27b). There is a wiry vigor in the linear components, which imparts a sense of vibrant energy to the figure, and a freedom in the posture, which increases its sense of naturalism.

From the remains of the wooden core for the forearms, it appears that the hands were in an open position, that is, not joined in the teaching mode in front of the chest, but probably in the *abhayā* (right) with the left hand possibly holding the bottle typical for Maitreya. The feet are turned with the side facing outward, unlike the manner that shows the flat upper face of the foot, as seen in the Group 12 painting of Maitreya Bodhisattva in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 7.41, 8.48) of ca. 425. Rather, it is very similar to the representation in the bronze cross-ankled Maitreya in Fig. 9.28a, which was dated in Vol. II to ca. 430's along with the other similar bronze in the Nelson-Atkins Museum (Fig. 8.81).

The depiction of the dhoti is distinctive. It has a wide spread over the lap with a broad central vertical panel created by the hems of the dhoti which seem to cascade on the central axis making stiff repetitive parallel filling lines between the edges. The ends of a wide sash-like belt splay outward from the center of the waist band and curve over the right and left thighs emphasizing the sweeping rhythms of the linear scheme as a whole. Other features are equally dramatic and clearly portrayed with a sense of coherent, simple patterning. Incised lines make sweeping parallel, curved folds across the expanse between the waist and leg. Over the long, slender legs, U-shaped pleats are indicated by alternating deep and shallow incised lines. This particular technique is also seen in the Amitāyus Buddha of the Group 6 niche dated 424 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 6.8b), though it appears more refined in the Group 6 Amitāyus. The vigorous movements of the Mai-chi shan image are perhaps closer to the bolder step pleats with an incised line next to the edge as used in the bronze Buddha in Fig. 5.42, dated in Vol. II to ca. 400-420, which was suggested as possibly from the Shensi region.<sup>39</sup> The awkward area around the crossed ankles is treated abstractly with groupings of vertical incised lines bordered by the curved diagonal lines coming off the legs and three rows of horizontal hems. This is similar to the patterning used in the cross-ankled Bodhisattva in the small niche of Cave 78 (Fig. 9.12a), but more strongly presented. Overall, the proportioning and posture of this cross-ankled Maitreya is close to the painted image in Cave 76 at Kizil, dated in Vol. II to ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 445-447; figs. 2.75a-c.

<sup>40</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 678-681; fig 2.97d.

The shoulder scarf is particularly dramatic in this image. It has a very wide loop at the elbow (seen on the left side) with five wide pleats that twist into a narrower cluster and then turn to widen into two large prongs, visible at the far left in Fig. 9.29a. The designs of these folds in the forked ends of the scarf relate to the designs in the ends of the scarves on the Bodhisattvas of temple site A3b at Shorchuk Ming-oi, Karashahr on the Northern Silk Road. Those Bodhisattvas also show similar torso formation. The clay images of site A3b were dated to late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century in Vol. II.<sup>41</sup> Maitreya Bodhisattva was a popular image at the site of Shorchuk Ming-oi and the A3b temple was probably a shrine with Maitreya Bodhisattva accompanied by two rows of seated Bodhisattvas, perhaps presenting a scene of Maitreya's teaching in Tuṣita Heaven. The dynamic twisting of the scarves of the Cave 169 Maitreya also relates to similar examples in some stucco sculptures in Gandhāra, such as those from the main stupa at Mohrā Morādu (Fig. 8.8k), which also model the exposed upper torso in clear units similar to the style of the Mai-chi shan Cave 169 Maitreya. The Mohrā Morādu images were suggested as dating into the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Chapter 8.

The face of the Mai-chi shan Cave 169 Bodhisattva is heart-shaped with soft features, shallow eyes and small mouth. It is relatively close to the face of Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 Group 16 Contemplative Bodhisattva dating ca. 400 or slightly later (Fig. 4.41). The crown is well preserved and is typical of the Mai-chi shan style with three plaques which, however, appear to have more detail in relief than the crowns of the Cave 74 Bodhisattvas (Figs. 9.17a, b). The kerchief type pleated ribbon falling from the back of the crown at both sides seems to have more freedom and simplicity than those of the Cave 74 Bodhisattvas (Fig. 9.15a). The hair is rather loosely bunched into strands and looped into "French-braid" type clusters from the center. The hair strands have much more assertion of individual shape than seen in the long hair strands of the Group 17 Bodhisattva in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, or even the Bodhisattvas of Caves 78 and 74 at Mai-chi shan, and seem closer to the simple renderings in the Bodhisattvas of Group 6 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Fig. 6.14a). The jewelry is simple and is the same type as seen in the Caves 78 and 74 Bodhisattvas as well as in the Asian Art Museum Kuanyin and in the Bodhisattvas of the Group 6 niche in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 dated to 424, except that the arm bands of the Cave 169 Maitreya do not have the circular jewel projection, and the neckband has an added raised rim at the inner edge. Comparison of these various details indicates a date for this Mai-chi shan Maitreya around 420.

The pedestal is remarkably big with a wide seat, bold scoring of the detail (including some lotus petals visible on the image's left side) and some diagonal scoring of the thick central band.<sup>42</sup> The sole surviving attendant Bodhisattva is distinguished for its gentle demeanor, rather large round head with delicate facial features, open armed posture, and slender, willowy body (Figs. 9.29a, b).

<sup>41</sup> Rhie (2002), p. 741; figs. 5.8b-d.

<sup>42</sup> M. Kuno makes an interesting observation that in Cave 165, which is located above Cave 78 (Fig. 9.3) there is the remains of a similar pedestal as well as some wall paintings that have remains of a palace-like structure. Cave 165 presently has Sung period stucco images, but she notes that originally this cave may have had a cross-ankled Maitreya with Tuṣita Heaven palace motifs in the wall paintings. M. Kuno (1988), p. 83. She indicates that this could be an arrangement similar to those seen later with a cross-ankled Maitreya in Tuṣita Heaven positioned above the paired Buddha niche of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna—a configuration frequently seen in the caves at Yün-kang from around the 480's. That is, a conscious pairing of elements from the *Lotus Sutra* with the Tuṣita Heaven of Maitreya positioned at the top.

## B. Cave 69

Cave 69 has been largely repaired, apparently in the Western Wei period (535- 557) but the seated Buddha (H. 75 cm [2.46 ft.]) appears to be original from the early period (Figs. 9.31a, b). With small, slender hands and fingers, much like those of the Cave 169 standing Bodhisattva (Fig. 9.29a), it seems to make a vitarka mudrā with the right hand and holds the end of the robe with the left hand. This position is known in the preaching Buddha paintings of Wen-shu shan 文殊山 and Tun-huang Cave 272. The small shape of the hands and fingers is also a trait of the Wei Wen-lang stele dated 424 (Fig. 9.16c). The figure has a tall torso, but narrow legs and shoulders which impart a strangely uplifted aspect to the seated figure. A similar proportioning is observable in the small bronze dhyānāsana Buddhas of ca. 430's in the Nelson Atkins Museum Buddha in Fig. 9.32, and others like it.<sup>43</sup> The drapery is skillfully arranged with parallel incised pleats and the hems make a curved movement falling from the wrists that resembles the S-curved hems seen in the Wei Wen-lang stele dated 424 (Fig. 9.16c). Though less abstract than the 437 [Liu] Sung bronze Buddha in Fig. 2.15, there is nevertheless an interesting similarity with the figure in general, though the Mai-chi shan example is more naturalistic and has more emphasis on the movement of curved contours and drapery. The head style is particularly close and the hair, pulled with sloping contours to the rather flat uṣṇīṣa, is also very similar in each. The shape of the Buddha is close to that of the seated Buddhas of the thousand Buddha panel of Group 15 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, dated in Chapter 7 to ca. late 420's (Fig. 7.58b) and relates to the seated Buddha in Fig. 5.60 from Group 20 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu, which was dated in Chapter 5 to ca. 415-420.

The painted mandorla is elaborate and full, with an especially wide outer border of flame patterns. These are more developed than seen in the mandorla of the Group 6 Amitāyus in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu (Figs. 6.8a, 6.12a, b). The pedestal is wide with huge down-turned lotus petals, which are uncommon, and possibly later repair. Judging from its style, this Buddha likely dates ca. 420, a date which was similarly suggested for the Maitreya Bodhisattva of the adjacent Cave 169.

## V. CONCLUSIONS: EARLY CAVES AT MAI-CHI SHAN

The Mai-chi shan Buddhist site was probably opened under the Later Ch'in 後秦 (385-418), based in Ch'ang-an not far to the east of Mai-chi shan (Fig. 1.1). Because of its location, Mai-chi shan was subject to many of the vicissitudes of the volatile history engulfing the area. The T'ien-shui 天水-Ch'in chou 秦州 region where Mai-chi shan is located was of strategic importance to Ch'ang-an, which, during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, was the capital of several successive kingdoms controlling much of the northern part of China. However, with Later Ch'in weakening around 416, the Western Ch'in with their capital in Fu-han 枹罕 near Ping-ling ssu 炳靈寺, was able to acquire the T'ien-shui area during the reign of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an 乞伏熾磐 in 417 and held it until ca. 428. However, when the Western Ch'in was collapsing under Ch'i-fu Mu-mo 乞伏暮末 in ca. 430, the T'ien-shui area eventually fell to the Ta Hsia 大夏, which gained control of Ch'ang-an from 418 until about 426, when Ch'ang-an came under attack by the T'o-pa 拓跋 (Northern) Wei 魏. In 427 Ho-lien Ch'ang 赫連昌 (then the ruler of Ta Hsia) was defeated by the Northern Wei at T'ung-wan 統萬 in northern Shensi 陝西 (Fig. 1.1) and fled to Shang-kuei 上邽 (T'ien-shui). At the same time his brother, Ho-lien Ting 赫連定, who at the

<sup>43</sup> Rhie (2002), figs. 2.92-293.



time was governing Ch'ang-an, also fled to Shang-kuei. When Ho-lien Ch'ang was captured by the Northern Wei, Ho-lien Ting called himself to be ruler. Even though he regained Ch'ang-an for a short time, he eventually had to flee under pressure of the Northern Wei. In 431 he was captured by the T'u-yü hun 吐谷渾 as he was escaping across the Yellow River. The T'u-yü hun turned Ho-lien Ting over to the Northern Wei, which then had control of the Ch'ang-an and Ch'in-chou region and were on their way to further conquests in western Kansu.<sup>44</sup> Ch'i-fu Mu-mo, the last ruler of the Western Ch'in had meanwhile been killed by Ho-lien Ting at T'ien-shui in 431, thus ending the Western Ch'in kingdom.

From 431 the Northern Wei controlled the T'ien-shui area. By 446 the Ch'iu-ch'ih 仇池 garrison at T'ien-shui had been established by the Northern Wei and the area appears to have been relatively stabilized. The Ch'iu-ch'ih group of the Ti 氐 seem to have been strong in the area from early in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. From the inscriptions on the pedestal of Cave 78 at Mai-chi shan, it seems that members of the Ch'iu-ch'ih garrison were donors to what was probably some restoration of the cave, probably after the period of the Northern Wei Buddhist Persecution of 446-452. Since the painting with the donors and inscriptions is a second layer, it appears that the cave was originally made before that time.

In the early years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Mai-chi shan had become a famous meditation place for Buddhist monks from the Ch'in chou 秦州 and also the Ch'ang-an areas. Hsüan-kao 玄高 and T'an-hung 曇弘 and others are known to have been at Mai-chi shan, probably sometime after 411 (when Buddhahadra, who had been Hsüan-kao's teacher, was forced to leave Ch'ang-an and went south to Lu shan 廬山 and then Chien-k'ang 建康), and at the latest by ca. 416-418, when the Later Ch'in was collapsing and Ch'ang-an was taken over in 418 by the armies of the Eastern Chin 東晉 under Liu Yü 劉裕 from the South. Ch'ang-an remained in duress and turmoil under the Ta Hsia control throughout most of the 420's until the Northern Wei captured it in 431.

Mai-chi shan is relatively close to Ch'ang-an down the Wei River 渭水, and it appears to have been a favorite meditation site during the Later Ch'in and the Western Ch'in period of control (until ca. 428). Probably from around 415 to the early 420's Hsüan-kao, T'an-hung and possibly the foreign master T'an-ma-pi 曇摩毘 were at the site. Hsüan-kao was later falsely accused to the Western Ch'in court, and forced into exile in the mountains (possibly near Ping-ling ssu). He was finally exonerated through the intercession of the monk T'an-hung, who travelled from Szechwan to Fu-han, the capital of the Western Ch'in, in order to clear Hsüan-kao's reputation. Hsüan-kao was subsequently honored by Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an. Later he went to Ku-ts'ang 姑臧, the capital of the Northern Liang 北涼 in central Kansu (Fig. 1.1) at the invitation of its ruler, Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜. Before Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün died in 433, Hsüan-kao already had left for P'ing-ch'eng 平城, the capital of the Northern Wei.

From the analysis of the images presented in this chapter, it appears that Cave 78 is the earliest major cave at the site, probably opened during the Later Ch'in, perhaps sometime ca. 405-410. Cave 74 was probably opened shortly thereafter, perhaps ca. 410-420, making a pair of caves with similar iconography, which appears to reflect the *Lotus Sutra*. Caves 169 and 69 are clearly linked together as a pair (by the entwined dragon arch) and are likely to represent Maitreya Bodhisattva in Tuṣita Heaven and Maitreya, the Future Buddha. Both are well established in China by the early 5<sup>th</sup> century by the *Lotus Sutra*, by several texts on Maitreya translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa in ca. 303 A.D., as well as mentioned in several of the Āgamas translated by the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century, and also in some translations by Kumārajīva, including the Maitreya sutras (see note 38) and another translation of the *Lotus Sutra*. The small niches Caves 169 and 69 appear to date around the 420's

<sup>44</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 381-382.



during the period of Western Ch'in control of the area and before the unsettled period from 427 until Northern Wei acquisition in 431.

Stylistically, these four caves all appear to relate to remains in Ch'ang-an, even though there are only a few remains from that great center, probably because of the devastation experienced by Ch'ang-an during the Buddhist Persecution of 446-452. Perhaps we can see in the splendid images of Caves 78 and 74 in particular a reflection of the Buddhist art of the Ch'ang-an area during the period which saw the flourishing of Buddhist studies and translations during the reign of Yao Hsing 姚興 when Kumārajīva was there. Even Caves 169 and 69 may have been executed by artists of the Ch'in chou area that may have been traditionally linked with the Ch'ang-an artistic environment.

Other important features of these four early caves at Mai-chi shan concern their apparent relation with the *Lotus Sutra*. With regard to Caves 78 and 74, some Gandhāran image steles offer tentative evidences that seem to point to a *Lotus Sutra* iconography in both Gandhāra and in these two caves at Mai-chi shan. The theme of the Buddhas of the Three Times is prevalent in the *Lotus Sutra*, as is the presence of Maitreya Bodhisattva and his relation with Tuṣita Heaven, which is taught by Śākyamuni in the *Lotus Sutra* with respect to rebirth in the presence of Maitreya. Certainly Caves 78 and 74 have marked emphasis on three large Buddhas, the central one probably being Śākyamuni teaching. The singling out of two Bodhisattvas, each in an individual shrine-niche, can also be understood with regard to the cross-ankled Bodhisattva as a representation of Maitreya in Tuṣita Heaven. The contemplative Bodhisattva, however, is more difficult to determine, but may also tentatively be considered to relate to the *Lotus Sutra*. Caves 78 and 74 appear to represent a single, unified scheme and not different, unrelated themes put together. In that matter, the contemplative Bodhisattva could represent Avalokiteśvara, or even Samantabhadra, both of which have important chapters in the *Lotus Sutra*. If the scheme is to imply the beginning and the end of the *Lotus Sutra*, then the Maitreya (who appears in the Preface) and Samantabhadra (who appears in the last chapter) may be a combination to seriously consider. The connection between the Maitreya shrine-niche and the contemplative Bodhisattva shrine-niche should have some significant meaning, which still remains elusive.

Cave 78 and 74 offer us a vision of nearly colossal sized images probably used in meditation during a period when meditation was popular in Buddhist circles, particularly with monks of this time. Caves 169 and 69 provide a glimpse of a clear pair related to Maitreya faith. The popular worship of Maitreya is well attested by inscriptions in the Liang chou stone stupas and in the biographies of the monks of this time. Not only was birth in Tuṣita Heaven a widely accepted ideal, but even the visiting of Maitreya in Tuṣita to obtain his teaching was a goal of some noted monks of that time. We can thus take the splendid imagery of these early caves at Mai-chi shan to reflect several major concerns of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century Buddhists. Also, they probably reveal to us the magnificent artistry in images that are likely to be related to the sophisticated Buddhist imagery of the Ch'ang-an area.

### CONCLUSIONS: VOLUME III

This series of books seeks to comprehensively understand the early developments in Chinese Buddhist art, its sources, relationships, contributions and interpretations. This volume, which is the first part of the study of the Kansu region in northwest China during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (317-439), focuses on the art from the eastern part of Kansu, mainly under the kingdom of the Western Ch'in 西秦, and provides an essential, foundational basis for the subsequent volumes. In addition, a number of major issues emerged, the study and resolution of which seem to have wide-ranging interest and significance. The main themes, issues and results of this volume are briefly noted below.

I. A detailed chronology provided by the sculptures and wall paintings in Cave 169 at the cave temple site of Ping-ling ssu 炳靈寺 on the upper reaches of the Yellow River is provided here in more detailed analysis and dating than have been done hitherto. Because of earlier work in Vols. I and II, such a detailed chronology became feasible. Some of the conclusions regarding the dating and chronology of the early works at Ping-ling ssu include:

- 1) the standing Buddha in Niche No.1 near the entrance of the site becomes the oldest known monumental Buddha to survive in China, ca. 375-385;
- 2) the early phase of images in Cave 169 includes the large images of the West (main) Wall, Groups 18, 17 and 16 that date ca. 385-400 A.D.;
- 3) the East (entrance) Wall has a large thousand Buddha painting (Group 24), dating ca. 400-410;
- 4) the South (left) Wall (Groups 23-20) paintings and sculptures reveal a slightly later phase, ranging from ca. 405 to ca. 420;
- 5) the North (right) wall has a span from ca. 400 to ca. 430, when major work appears to have ended during the final days of the Western Ch'in (demised 431 A.D.). Groups 1 and 4 are ca. 400 and Groups 7 and 9-14 are ca. 425; Group 3 is the latest, ca. 428-430. Among the chronological issues, the important Group 6 sculptures and paintings required re-assessment of its dated inscription, which can be read as either 420 (the *nien-hao* 年號 date) or 424 (the *tz'u* 次date, an astrological date based on the stations of Jupiter). For determining the accurate date, further information was needed, and this fortunately became available as this study unfolded (see below).

II. Certain groupings of images in Cave 169 appear to have special significance iconographically. Some of these had already been recognized, but there were others that had not. Cave 169 offers a number of cases that show the Buddhist practices and worship preferences of the time, which could now be generally pinpointed on the basis of the detailed chronology noted above. Thus we can apprehend the Buddhist thought and practice of the time in this area in starker and more complete form than previously, and more than provided by the art studied in Vols. I and II, which consists mostly small votive bronze images from northeastern China (to which the well-preserved bronze Buddha altar found at Ching ch'uan 涇川 studied in Chapter 2 also contributes). Also, there are some differences to be seen in the Cave 169 iconography when compared with the early art of Central Asia, such as seen in the early cave temples at Kizil, Kumtura and Shorchuk Ming-oi studied in Vol. II. This indicates that China had its own particular focus despite the fact that there was continued artistic interrelation.

For understanding the problems of iconographic identity more clearly, the textual basis and an awareness of elements of Buddhist history of the time needed to be considered. This eventually required some study of a considerable number of sutras and texts translated into Chinese prior to ca. 425 A.D., which also involved, in certain cases, delving into the problems of textual history, dates and authorship. This pursuit, however, yielded some surprisingly significant results, such as the following.

1) Establishing Group 18 in Cave 169 as based on the early translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* (*Lotus Sutra*) by Dharmarakṣa in 286. This translation (the *Cheng fa-hua ching* 正法華經, T 263) is different in terminology and in the translation of certain passages from the translation made by Kumārajīva in 406 (*Miao fa lien hua ching* 妙法蓮華經, T 262). This indicates not only that texts can actually relate quite closely to art, but that in using texts one needs to be careful with regard to the internal issues of the texts. It is important to have as accurate a dating mechanism as possible for both the art and the texts, then this kind of detailed study can possibly yield unexpectedly important results. This may be the case for Group 18 and its suggested identity as the scene of Śākyamuni and the ten-direction Buddhas, who are the “transformation bodies” of Śākyamuni, as graphically described in Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra* according to the Dharmarakṣa translation, which is translated in Chapter 4 for the pertinent passages.

For Group 6, one of the most astonishingly fruitful and important remains in early Chinese Buddhist art, the study of texts and art revealed some remarkable new evidences. Even though the Group 6 sculptures, wall paintings and inscriptions are already known to be important, a deeper study using texts produced even more consequential data. This niche has remains of inscriptions that include a date of making, the names of some of the donors and the names of the images. When looked at carefully, however, some problems emerged.

a) The date in the inscription could be either 420 or 424. Though the 420 date has been generally accepted and used in publications, it is not entirely certain and the problem of interpretation was difficult to resolve without additional information.

b) Another question was the textual basis of the triad of sculptures, inscribed as Wu-liang-shou fo 無量壽佛 (Amitāyus Buddha), □Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa □觀世音菩薩 (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), and Te-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa 得大勢至菩薩 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva). This would appear to be forthright, but it required investigation of the known Chinese translations of texts dealing with Amitāyus/Amitābha and Sukhāvati (the Buddha land of Amitāyus/Amitābha). Studies by scholars such as Fujita Kōtatsu and recent work by Paul Harrison and Jan Nattier on early translations of texts into Chinese were very helpful. From a study of this literature and by checking the Chinese translations, particularly regarding the terminology and phraseology, it was possible to see that the basic text for Group 6 was very likely to be the *Wu-liang-shou ching* (T 360). However, the translation(s) of the (*Larger*) *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, of which the *Wu-liang-shou ching* is one, and the date of the translation of this text is one of the most difficult problems in early Chinese Buddhist textual history, even for text specialists. Again, more information was needed in order to hone the issue and perhaps shed a little more light on the date and authorship of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*. Since Group 6 is dated, it seemed possible that it could make a contribution in this area.

c) More information came from the Group 6 wall paintings, where there is a panel of the ten-direction Buddhas with inscribed names and directions for each. These were found (in a study by Chang Pao-hsi) to match with those named in the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching* 華嚴經 (T 278), the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, translated by Buddhābhadrā in Chien-k'ang 建康 in the South. According to records in the *Ch'u san-tsang chi chi* 出三藏記集 and in a colophon at the end of the sutra, the translation was completed

in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yüan-hsi 元熙 (420 A.D.) and the revision/collation was completed in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yung-ch'ü 永初 (422 A.D.). These dates are important to compare with the date of the Group 6 main inscription, which is either the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 420 (the *nien-hao* date) or 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 424 (the *tz'u* date). The date of 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 420 would be too early for the translated text of the *Hua-yen ching* (finished translation in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of 420) to reach the Western Ch'in in time to be included in the wall painting of the ten-direction Buddhas (not to mention with regard to the date of 422 for the completion of the revision and collation of the text). This factor provides the new information needed to determine the date of the Group 6 niche with some certainty as 424, the date based on the stations of Jupiter, a time-honored way of calculating dates from ancient times in China, and less changeable than the *nien-hao* system, which changes at the will of the ruler.

d) Returning to the *Wu-liang-shou ching* with the added evidence provided by the more certain date of the Group 6 niche, it can be seen that the 424 date for the Group 6 Amitāyus niche, the iconography of which was likely based on the *Wu-liang-shou ching* text, could readily support the 421 translation by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün 寶雲, thought by some scholars as the most plausible among the possible translators and dates. Since Group 6 is now securely datable to 424 and not 420, which would be too early for supporting the 421 translation date of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, the Group 6 niche becomes an important factor in the history of this text. In this way, not only was the date of Group 6 settled by the information regarding the 60-chüan *Hua-yen ching*, but in turn the Group 6 niche helped to confirm the 421 date—and hence the authorship by Buddhahadra and Pao-yün—of the *Wu-liang-shou ching*, considered a fundamentally important text of the later Pure Land traditions.

III. There are many other ramifications from the Group 6 study, including these:

- 1) T'an-ma-pi 曇摩毘 and Tao-jung 道融 are the two leading monks in the donor procession of Group 6. T'an-mi-pi, a famous foreign meditation master, is also known from the biography of Hsüan-ko 玄高 in the *Kao-seng chuan* 高僧傳. Both T'an-ma-pi and Hsüan-ko cross paths at Mai-chi shan and have a history with the Western Ch'in court of Ch'i-fu Chih-p'an 乞伏熾磐 (r. 412-428). Tao-jung is also known as a donor in the earlier thousand Buddha painting (ca. 400-410) of Group 24 in Ping-ling ssu Cave 169. Tao-jung became known as a teacher of the *Lotus Sutra* during the period Kumārajīva was in Ch'ang-an (from ca. 402 until his death, ca. 911 or 913), and, with the backing of Kumārajīva, became famous for winning the debate with a foreign heterodox master who had come from Sri Lanka to defeat the Buddhist masters in China. The Group 6 paintings and inscriptions of T'an-mi-pi and Tao-jung add a further element of verification concerning these historical events.
- 2) The donors of Group 6 are high officials of the Western Ch'in court. From their sophisticated garments we can understand that by that time in Western Ch'in, the court was using a style and form of apparel that clearly relates to the Eastern Chin 東晉 in the South, as known from the paintings of Ku K'ai-chih 顧愷之 (d. ca. 406).
- 3) There is a clear linkage between the new translations produced by Buddhahadra in Chien-k'ang from ca. 412 into the 420's and the Group 6 niche. Even the choice of Amitāyus and the *Wu-liang-shou ching* as the main icon and text seems to reflect the strong Amitāyus worship and patronage known in the South, especially as related to the great monk Hui-yüan 慧遠 (d. 416) on Lu shan 廬山. Group 6 shows a relation with the South in texts, Amitāyus worship, and even in the fashion styles of the high class donors. It also appears that the style of the Buddha sculpture and his halo, etc., could be in the artistic traditions of the South (Eastern Chin), so in Group 6 we are likely to be witnessing the magnificent and amazing survival of the stylistic traditions of sculpture and painting of the South of this time.

IV. Among the important remains of Cave 169 there are four groups of what appear to be a set of five Buddhas (in one case four Buddhas with Maitreya Bodhisattva). These occur in Groups 16, 23, 20 and 12 in chronological sequence from ca. 400-425. Though three of these groups of five have been noted by Teng Yü-hsiang and others, that of Group 12 has not, and the others were not seriously considered for their iconographic significance. Solving the problem of the identity, origins and development of the set of five Buddhas required investigation into the major sources of Buddhist art in India, Gandhāra, Afghanistan and Central Asia. In addition, looming over this very interesting appearance of the four differently configured groups of five Buddhas in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu dating within the span of the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, is the stupendous set of colossal images in the five T'an-yao 曇曜 caves at Yün-kang 雲崗, made under the Northern Wei 北魏 during the 460's-480's following the restoration of Buddhism after the 446-452 Buddhist persecution of Emperor Tai-wu 太武帝. The five T'an-yao caves are a subject I have been working on since 1982. In the work for this book, there appeared to be a linkage to further understanding the five T'an-yao caves through the earlier appearances of five Buddhas in Cave 169. Thus, taking the Cave 169 images as an important remains within China that show four different forms of the five Buddha configuration, I searched for possible prototypes. The most fruitful results came from the art of Gandhāra and eastern Afghanistan (Haḍḍa), the area known to the Chinese of this time as Chi-pin 罽賓. This initiated a concerted study of the Gandhāra and Afghanistan art of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries that is presented in Chapter 8. It should also be noted that the study in Chapter 8 shows the importance of the iconography of the seven Buddhas and the Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa (the present eon) in both Gandhāra and China.

Because the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan is so complex with regard to its history, dating, chronology, texts and iconography, quite a detailed study is needed. Here, however, I focus on the appearance of sets of multiple Buddhas, which fortunately survive on many of the stupas of Taxila, Peshawar and Haḍḍa in particular. These have not been studied much since the work of Marshall, Stein, and others in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The study presented in Chapter 8 opened up not only incredibly interesting and important issues that related to early Chinese Buddhist art, but it also showed that China offers rare evidences that can help in the study of Gandhāran art. It is thus that I learned the practical significance of studying early Chinese Buddhist art in close relation to the art of Gandhāra and Afghanistan, in addition to that of India proper and Central Asia. Gandhāra and Afghanistan open up an altogether higher level of understanding of the Buddhism and Buddhist art of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Knowing the history, the translated texts, and the art of China in turn, however, shed new and important light on Gandhāran art. Furthermore, the investigation into the five Buddha iconography led to a major breakthrough in understanding the main images of the five T'an-yao caves. Seen in the light of these new evidences from Gandhāra and Afghanistan as well as those from Ping-ling ssu Cave 169, we can apprehend a course of development which reaches the immensely more complex expression witnessed in the T'an-yao caves. There is still more to find out before the fuller story is known, but the Gandhāran and Ping-ling ssu evidences are a firm step on the way.

Further, these evidences reflect the incredibly rapid growth of Mahāyāna concepts of Buddhism and art that seem to come like an avalanche in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century in Gandhāra and are picked up and even elaborated on in China during the Sixteen Kingdoms and early Northern Wei periods. The art and texts show us an amazing development in China from ca. 400-460's, that is, in many ways, reflecting the stupendous emergence of imagery seen in Gandhāra and Afghanistan in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries (but which decreases and declines markedly by around the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Gandhāra, but seems to continue in Afghanistan). Ping-ling ssu Cave 169 must be credited with opening the door and



showing us the early stages of this movement in the Buddhist art of China preserved in the Buddhist art of Kansu. This volume is only the beginning of the Kansu study, which will continue with central and western Kansu in subsequent volumes of this series.

There are many issues that remain to be considered, and I will just briefly note a few for those who are interested:

- 1) the problem of the iconography of the Buddhas of the Three Times 三世 (three worlds) and the possible meaning as Past, Present and Future as seen in the levels of some stupas;
- 2) the problem of the pair of the cross-ankled and contemplative Bodhisattvas, which is still unresolved, probably because of multiple possibilities and uses as the art is changing in different regions over time;
- 3) the degree of influence imparted by the Visualization Sutras on the art;
- 4) the details of identifying the *Lotus Sutra* in all its ramifications in apparent variations in both China and Gandhāra;
- 5) understanding the 1,000 Buddhas, which seem elusive in Gandhāra, but which may appear in Bāmiyān, and are certainly a major factor in China;
- 6) the appearance of the colossal images, which remains an issue with respect to Bāmiyān, Kizil and China;
- 7) the fuller understanding of Maitreya in various forms in China and in relation to Central Asia as well as Gandhāra.

It should finally be noted that the rare early paintings of the *Lotus Sutra* in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu interestingly show the two Buddhas of Chapter 11, Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna, as seated together in the seven jewel pagoda with both legs pendant. Further, the amazing Group 18 with the ten-direction Buddhas is a wonderful display and panorama probably also from Chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sutra*. Both the Group 18 standing Buddha and the Group 17 standing Bodhisattva are special images that remain to show the subtle yet strong sculptural styles of ca. 400, a time with few indications of the art of the period just after the wars of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of a glorious few decades in the development of Buddhist text translations and in the Buddhist art of North, South, and Northwest China.

This volume ends with Mai-chi shan and four of the caves and niches at this site that so graphically remind us of the meditation practices of the Buddhists of that time. When actually at the site, one tends to be terrified by walking at the edge of space along the high, vertical cliff. But in due time, in the presence of the beauties of the site, its scenery and its images, one calms down. The human history is brought home by the biography of Hsüan-kaio, just as it is in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu with the monks Tao-jung and T'an-ma-pi. As we saw that Group 6 in Cave 169 at Ping-ling ssu took us to the apparent roots of the now lost Buddhist art of the Eastern Chin in the South during the time of Buddhābhaddra's translation activities, Caves 78 and 74 at Mai-chi shan seem to possibly be showing us the grandeur of the artistic traditions of the great center of Ch'ang-an during the period of Kumārajīva's momentous translation work there from ca. 402-ca. 411. These Mai-chi shan caves also appear to offer important examples related to *Lotus Sutra* iconography that can be linked to examples in Gandhāra. In the Cave 169 niche at Mai-chi shan we probably see the oldest remaining cross-ankled Maitreya in China that can clearly be identified as Maitreya in Tuṣṭita Heaven.





## APPENDIX I

### Communication Routes Through Kansu to Central Asia and the West

There were various routes linking northern China with Central Asia, but the following are the four main ones during the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms (Fig. 1.2). Though there are more, there are fewer records of them in the histories.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Ho-hsi lu 河西路

This is the main passage of the so-called Silk Road. It existed from the Han dynasty and went from Ch'ang-an over the Ch'in-lung 秦隴, through the Ho-hsi corridor 河西走廊 to the desert (liu-sha 流沙) and on to the Western Regions 西域. During the Later Ch'in, Hung-shih 弘始 6<sup>th</sup> year (404), the monk Chih-meng 智猛 and 15 others who accompanied him used this route to go on their journey to India in search of the vaipulya (Mahāyāna) texts, which Chih-meng felt were lacking in China. They crossed the [Yellow] River, passed 36 mountains and rivers, reached Liang chou city 涼州城 (Ku-tsang [Wu-wei]), passed the Yang kuan 陽關 and went West into the desert, finally reaching Shan-shan 鄯善, Kucha 龜茲, Khotan 于闐 and other countries.<sup>2</sup> Concerning the T'o-pa Wei, it is said that this route was used a lot and "every year tribute did not stop." When the T'o-pa Wei emissaries passed Ku-tsang, it is said that the Northern Liang had "guides" to "accompany and support them to the desert."<sup>3</sup>

#### 2. Ho-hsi Southern Route (Ho-hsi nan-lu 河西南路)

This is a branch of the Ho-hsi lu route. It starts in Ch'ang-an, goes over the Lung shan 隴山 through Ho-nan kuo 河南國 (Western Ch'in) and the Southern Liang kingdom, passing the Yang-nü shan 養女山 to the north of Hsi-ning 西寧 and passing Ch'i-lien shan's 祁連山 Pien-tu k'ou 扁都口 (in olden times called Ta tou-pa-ku 大鬬拔谷) and reaching Chang-yeh 張掖. Then it followed the Ho-hsi corridor to reach the Western Regions 西域.

Fa-hsien 法顯 took this route. Starting at Ch'ang-an, he (and his group) went through Lung 隴 and reached "Ch'ien-kuei kuo" 乾歸國 (i.e., Western Ch'in). Moving forward (after the summer retreat) he reached [T'u-fa] Nü-t'an kuo [禿髮] 僭檀國 (Southern Liang), passed over the Yang-mu shan 養樓山 (same as Yang-nü-shan 養女山) and reached Chang-yeh 張掖 city. Then from Tun-huang he crossed the desert.<sup>4</sup>

Chang Pao-hsi, based on research by Lan chou University scholars, details this route as follows:

From Ch'ang-an the route followed the Wei River 渭水 through Lung-kuan 隴關 to T'ien-shui 天水, to the Lin-t'ao 臨洮 (large tributary of the Yellow River) to Lin-hsia 臨夏 and Yung-ching 永靖. It crossed the Yellow River at Lin-tsin kuan 臨津關 then went to Hsi-ning 西寧 (in present Ch'ing-hai 青海) and crossed the Ch'i-lien mountains 祁連山 in the Pien-tu k'ou 扁都口 pass and finally entered Ho-hsi corridor.<sup>5</sup> He further notes the *Ch'in chou chi* 秦州記 statement that Western Ch'in Ch'i-fu

<sup>1</sup> Ch'i Ch'en-chün, Lu Ch'ing-feng, and Kuo feng, *Wu-Liang shih lüeh*, Lanchou, 1988, p.165.

<sup>2</sup> Rhie (2002), pp. 128-130; Ch'i chen-chün, *et al* (1988), pp. 165-166.

<sup>3</sup> Ch'i Chen-chün, *et al* (1988), pp.164-166.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.166.

<sup>5</sup> Kansu sheng po-wu-kuan and Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u wen-wu pao-kuan so, introduction by Chang Pao-hsi, *Ping-ling ssu shih k'u*, Beijing, 1982, p. 2.

kingdom (385-431) spent three years to build a large bridge (height 50 chang 丈). The bridge is in Yung-ching hsien, near Ping-ling ssu. It was called Lin-tsin kuan 臨津關 in Sui and Feng-lin kuan 夙林關 in T'ang. This bridge facilitated the communication conditions.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Chü-yen lu 居延路

This passage is also called the Ts'ao-yüan lu 草原路 (Grassland Passage) or the Yin shan shan-lu 陰山山麓 (Yin shan foothill passage). It is parallel to the Ho-hsi lu 河西路. Starting from the valley of Yin shan 陰山, it passes through the Chü-yen lü chou 居延綠洲 oasis and reaches the north-south foothills of the western T'ien-shan 天山. In 420 the monk T'an-wu-chieh 曇無竭 left for the West from Ch'ang-an with his 25 disciples. They continued from the Lan chou area towards the West first going to Ho-nan kuo 河南國 (Western Ch'in) and then to Hai-hsi chün 海西郡 [probably Hsi-hai chün 西海郡] arriving at the Chü-yen 居延 oasis. Afterwards they followed the Chü-yen lu passage to go through the desert and reached Kao-ch'ang 高昌 (Turfan). (Hsi-hai is in Chü-yen, north of Chang-yeh, see Fig. 1.2). According to the geography section of the *Chin shu*, Hsi-hai was first established in Han, 195 A.D. It had one hsien called Chü-yen 居延. The Chü-yen Hsi-hai area was a key position on the main transportation point East-West and North-South.<sup>7</sup>

### 4. Ch'ing-hai lu 青海路

Ch'ing-hai lu is also called T'u-yü-hun lu 吐谷渾路 and Ho-nan lu 河南路. This passage goes through Western Ch'in territory and reaches present day Ch'ing-hai 青海, the domain of the T'u-yü-hun in this period (Map 1.2). It passes Hsi-p'ing 西平 (Hsi-ning 西寧), goes along the northern shore of Ch'ing-hai hu lake 青海湖 (Lake Kokonor), goes over the Ch'ai-ta-mu-p'en ti 柴達木盆地 basin and reaches the Western Regions. It can also access Tun-huang and, from south of Chang-yeh using the Ch'i-lien shan 祁連山 crossing and going into the Ho-hsi corridor, one can go to the region of the Jou-jan 柔然. From there one can go to various locales of the Western Regions. From Ch'ing-hai towards the east one can follow the north side of Hsi-ch'ing 西傾 mountain and go east following the Min river 岷江 to Szechwan (Shu 蜀) and on to the South.

During the Northern Liang period the Chiu-ch'üan 酒泉 monk Hui-lan 慧覽 went to the Western Regions and on his return journey he came through this passage from Khotan. His biography in the *Kao-seng chuan* says he left from Khotan on his return to China and took the passage through Ho-nan. When the Ho-nan T'u-yü-hun 吐谷渾 prince heard about Hui-lan's reputation and his virtue, he sent an emissary with money and ordered Shu to establish a temple (the Tso-chün ssu 左軍寺) and Hui-lan lived there.<sup>8</sup>

According to the *Wu Liang shih lüeh*,<sup>9</sup> during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, the communications with central China were often blocked, so this route became an especially important path between various kingdoms. Monks and commercial traffic (typically trade from the West of wool fabric, fragrances, medicine, silk and grape wine and various Chinese goods flowed out), were coming and going on this route. Even envoys from Former Liang 前涼 and the Northern Liang 北涼 all took this route for the South.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ch'i Chen-chün, *et al* (1988), pp.166-167.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167.

## APPENDIX II

Reference name	Amitābha/ Amitāyus (Buddha)	Avalokit-eśvara; Mahāsthāma- prāpta (Bodhisattvas)	Referants to Sukhāvati (Buddhaksetra)	Notes and Comments
1) <i>Pratyutpanna-samādhi Sūtra</i> ( <i>Po-chou san-mei ching</i> 般舟三昧經)	阿彌陀佛		西方 須摩提	13:418, (pp. 902c-919c); trans. by Lokakṣema, 179 A.D.
2) (Larger) <i>Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra</i>  a) [ <i>Ta</i> ] <i>A-mi-fo ching</i> [大] 阿彌陀經  ..... b) <i>Wu-liang ch'ing- ching</i> <i>p'ing-teng-chüeh ching</i> 無量清淨平等覺經 ( <i>Ping-teng-chüeh ching</i> 平等覺經)  ..... c) <i>Wu-liang-shou ching</i> 無量壽經	阿彌陀佛 (pp. 301a, 304b, 305a,b, 307b,c)  無量清淨佛 阿彌陀佛  ..... 無量壽佛	蓋樓亘 摩訶那鉢  ..... 蓋樓亘 摩訶那  ..... 觀世音 大勢至	阿彌陀佛國  ..... 無量清淨佛國 須摩提 西方  ..... 淨土 安養 安養國 安樂國 無量壽佛及其國土 無量壽國 無量佛國	12:362, (pp.300a-317c); trans. by Lokakṣema (?), Later Han (Harrison)  ..... 12:361, (pp. 279b-299c); trans. by Chih-ch'ien (?), ca. 250 A.D. (Harrison; Nattier)  ..... 12:360, (pp. 265c-279a); trans. by Buddhahadra and/or Pao-yün (?), 421 A.D. (Fujita and others)
3) <i>Mahālalitāparipṛcchā</i> a) <i>Lao-nü-jen ching</i> 老女人經  ..... b) <i>Lao-mu ching</i> 老母經  c) <i>Lao mu nü liu ying</i> <i>ching</i> 老母女六英經	   無量清淨佛 (p. 912c)		阿彌陀佛國 (p. 912b)  ..... 阿彌陀佛國 (p. 913b)	14:559, pp. 911c-912b); trans. by Chih-ch'ien (Nattier)  ..... 14:561, (pp. 912c-913b; prob. anon., Later Han or early Three Kingdoms (Nattier) 14:560, (pp. 912b-912c); trans. probably Guṇabhadra, ca. 435-443, [Liu] Sung

<p>4) <i>Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa</i></p> <p>a) <i>Wei-mo-chieh ching</i> 維摩詰經</p> <p>.....</p> <p>b) <i>Wei-mo-chieh so shuo ching</i> 維摩詰所說經</p>	<p>無量...(如來)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>阿彌陀佛</p>	<p>大勢至菩薩 (p.519b)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>觀世音菩薩 得大勢菩薩 (p.537b)</p>	<p>清淨</p> <p>.....</p> <p>淨土</p>	<p>14:474, (pp. 519a-536c); trans. by Chih-ch'ien, 223- 228 A.D.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>14:475, (pp. 520a-557b); trans. by Kumārajīva, 406 A.D.</p>
<p>5) <i>Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra (Lotus Sutra)</i></p> <p>a) <i>Cheng fa-hua ching</i> 正法華經</p> <p>.....</p> <p>b) <i>Miao fa lien hua ching</i> 妙法蓮華經</p>	<p>無量壽佛</p> <p>.....</p> <p>阿彌陀佛</p>	<p>光世音菩薩 大勢至 (p.63a)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>得大勢菩薩 觀世音菩薩</p>	<p>安養國</p> <p>.....</p> <p>安樂世界</p>	<p>9:263, (pp. 63a-134b); trans. by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu), 286 A.D. in Ch'an-an W. chin</p> <p>.....</p> <p>9:262, (pp. 1c-62b); trans. by Kumārajīva, 406 A.D.</p>
<p>6) <i>Brahmaviśeṣacintī-paripṛcchā Sūtra (Questions of Brahmā)</i></p> <p>a) <i>Ch'ih hsin fan tien so wen ching</i> 持心梵天所問經</p> <p>.....</p> <p>b) <i>Ssu i fan tien so wen ching</i> 思益梵天所問經</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Note: 光世音[得大勢菩薩] 受決經</p>		<p>光世音菩薩 得大勢菩薩 (p.17b)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>觀世音 得大勢 (p.48b-c)</p>		<p>15:585, (pp. 1a-33a); trans. by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu), 286 A.D.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>15:586, (pp. 33a-62a); trans. by Kumārajīva, 402 A.D.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>trans. by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu), lost.</p>
<p>7) <i>Bhadrakalpika Sūtra (Hsien-chieh ching</i> 賢劫經)</p>	<p>西方阿彌陀佛 (p.7b)</p>		<p>無量清淨佛土 (pp.1c; 60c)</p>	<p>14:425; (pp. 1-65); trans. by Chu Fa-hu (Dharmarakṣa), 291 or 300 A.D.</p>
<p>8) Chih Tun 支遁 (Chih Tao-lin 支道林) (314-366), Eulogy</p>	<p>彌陀 無量壽 (p.196b)</p>		<p>安養 (p.196b)</p>	<p><i>Kuang-hung-ming chi</i>, chüan 15; 52:2103, (pp. 196b-197a)</p>
<p>9) Chu Fa-k'uang 竺法曠 (327-402) (Amitāyus Image)</p>	<p>無量壽佛 (p.356c)</p>			<p><i>Kao-seng chuan</i>, chüan 3; 50:2059, (pp. 356c-357a)</p>

10) Tai K'uei 戴逵 (d. ca. 393 or 396) (sculptor of wooden Amitāyus (?) image at the Ling-pao ssu 靈寶寺, on the north side of K'uai-chi shan, Chekiang	無量壽 (p. 416c)			<i>Chi shan-chou san-pao kan tung lu</i> , by Tao-hsüan; 52:2106, (p. 416c)
11) Biographies of monks at Lu shan 廬山  a) Hui-yüan 慧遠 (334-416) ..... b) Seng-chi 僧濟 (came to Lu shan during 376-397 period) ..... c) Hui-yung 慧永 (d. 410) ..... d) Hui-ch'ih 慧持 (337- 412); (left Lu shan in 399)	無量壽(像) (p. 358c) ..... 彌陀 無量壽佛 (p. 362b) ..... ..... .....		西方 ( p. 358c) 西境 (p. 359c) ..... 西国 安養 (p. 362b) ..... 西方 (p. 362b) ..... 西方 (p. 361c)	<i>Kao-seng chuan</i> , chüan 6, 50:2059, (pp. 357c-361b) ..... <i>Kao-seng chuan</i> , chüan 6, 50:2059, (p. 362b) Also mentions the 無量壽經. ..... <i>Kao-seng chuan</i> , chüan 6, 50:2059, (p. 362a-b) ..... <i>Kao-seng chuan</i> , chüan 6; 50:2059, (pp. 361b-362a)
12) (Smaller) <i>Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra</i> ( <i>A-mi-to ching</i> 佛說阿彌 陀經) ..... Also see no. 4b ( <i>Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa</i> )  See no. 5b ( <i>Saddharmapuṇḍarīka</i> ) ..... See no. 6b ( <i>Brahmaviśeṣacintīpari- pṛcchā</i> )	阿彌陀 (pp. 346c, 347b) ..... 阿彌陀佛  阿彌陀佛	..... 觀世音菩薩 得大勢菩薩  觀世音菩薩 得大勢菩薩  觀世音菩薩 得大勢菩薩	極樂国土 (p. 347a, b)   安樂世界	12:366, (pp. 346b-348a); trans. by Kumārajīva, 402 A.D.  ..... Other sutras translated by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an
13) <i>Ta chih-tu lun</i> 大智度論	彌陀佛 (p. 79a)			25:1509, (pp. 57c-756c); Kumarajīva, 402-405.
14) <i>Kuan fo san-mei hai ching</i> 觀佛三昧海經	西方無量壽 [佛] (p. 688c)		極樂 (p. 688c)	15:643, (pp. 645c-697a); trans. by Buddhahbhadra, ca. 412-420?



<p>15) <i>Avatamsaka Sūtra</i> (<i>Ta-fang kuang fo hua-yen ching</i> 大方廣佛華嚴經) (<i>Hua-yen ching</i>) ..... See item 2c for <i>Wu-liang-shou ching</i> 無量壽經</p>	<p>無量壽佛 (p. 693c)</p>	<p>觀世音 (p. 718a-c)</p>	<p>安樂 (pp. 555c, 567b, 616a)</p>	<p>9:278, (pp. 395a-788b); trans. by Buddhahadra, trans. completed 420; revision completed 422 ..... possibly also translated by Buddhabhadra and/or Pao-yün</p>
<p>16) <i>Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa shou-chi ching</i> 觀世音菩薩[得大勢菩薩] 授記經 (1 chüan)</p>	<p>阿彌陀如來 (p. 353c)</p>	<p>觀世音 得大勢 (p. 353c)</p>	<p>西方... 有世界名安樂 (p. 353c) 安樂國土 安樂世界 (p. 356c)</p>	<p>12:371, (pp. 353b-357c); trans. by T'an-wu-chieh (Fa-yung), (ca. 420 A.D.?)</p>
<p>17) <i>Kuan wu-liang-shou-fo ching</i> 觀無量壽佛經 (1 chüan)</p>	<p>無量壽佛 阿彌陀佛</p>	<p>觀世音 大勢至 (pp. 344a,c; 346a, etc., many times)</p>	<p>西方極樂國土</p>	<p>12:365, (pp. 340c-346b); trans. by Kālayāśas, 424- 442 A.D.</p>

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### Abbreviations

ASI	Archaeological Survey of India
BMFEA	<i>Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities</i>
<i>Buddhavaṃsa</i>	Chronicle of Buddhas
CKMSCC	<i>Chung-kuo mei-shu ch'üan-chi</i>
CSTCC	<i>Ch'u san-tsang chi chi</i>
<i>Daizōkyō</i>	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>
IsIAO	Istituto Italiano per L'Africa e L'Oriente
IsMEO	Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
Korean Catalogue	<i>The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue</i>
KSC	<i>Kao-seng chuan</i>
MDAFA	<i>Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan</i>
YK	<i>Yün-kang</i>

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Plate III Entrance to the cave temple site of Ping-ling ssu, Kansu





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## BLACK-AND-WHITE PLATES

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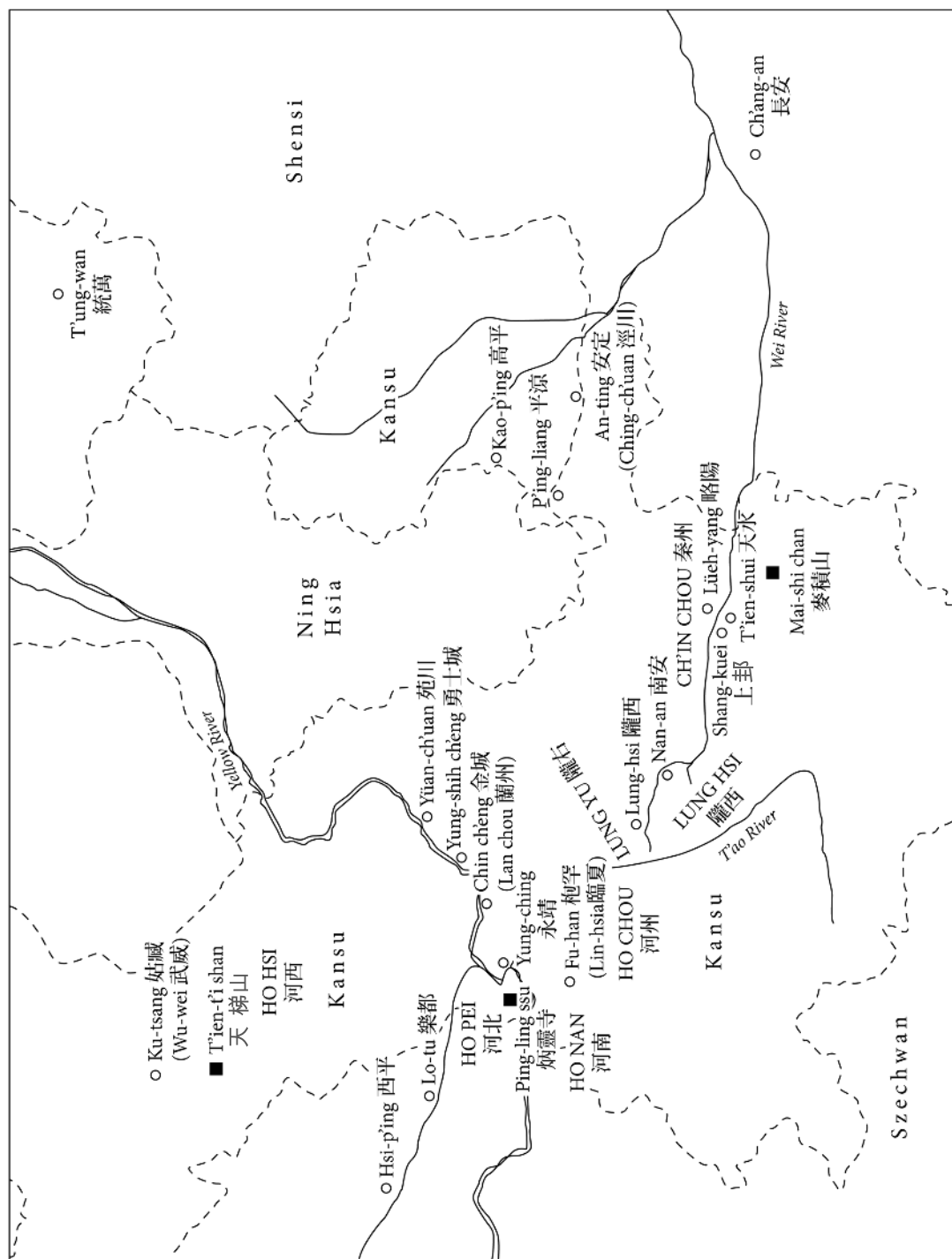


Fig. 1.1 Map of Eastern Kansu and Adjacent Areas during the Western Ch'ü in (385-431 A.D.)

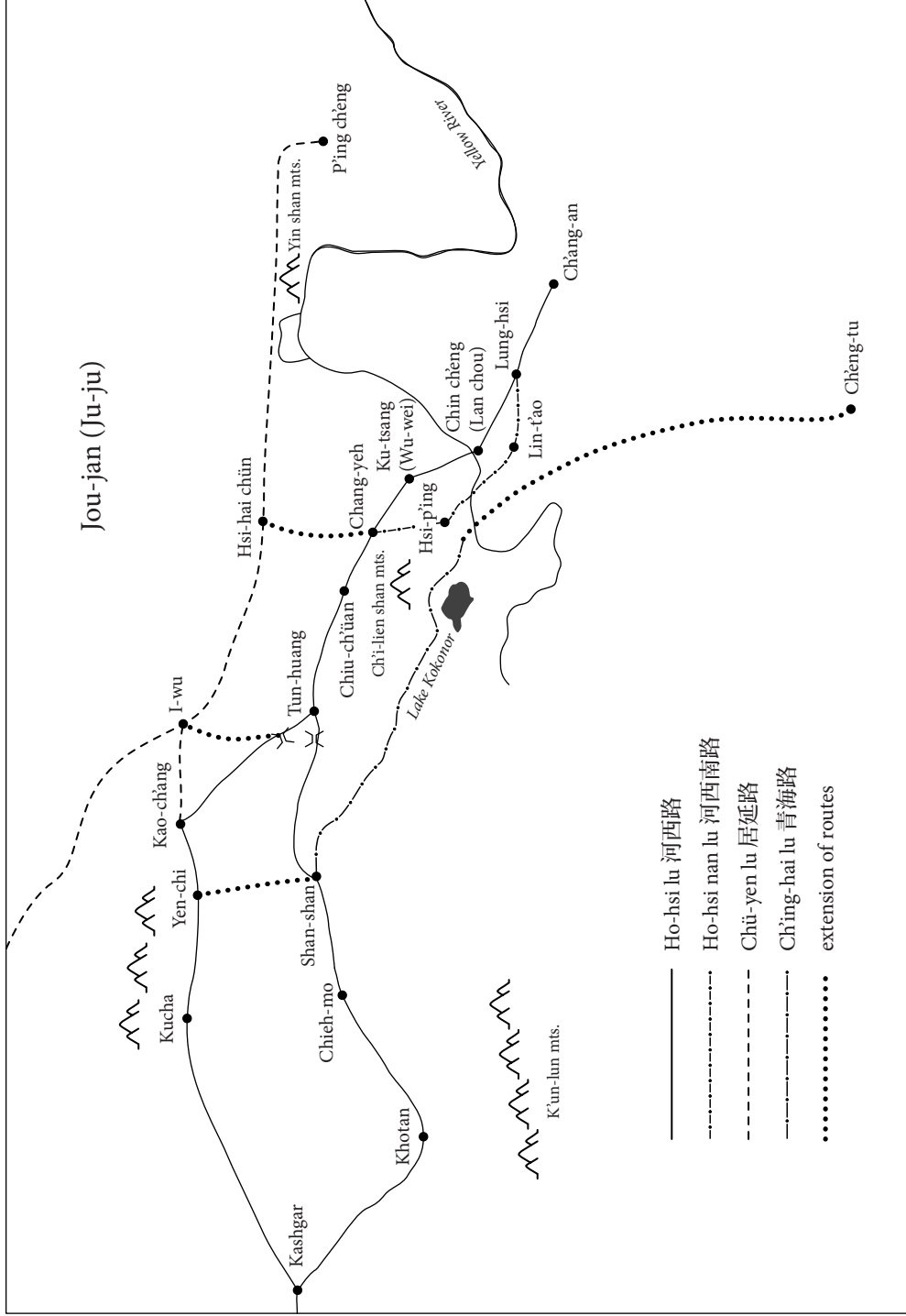


Fig. 1.2 Map of the Main Routes from Ch'ang-an to Central Asia during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (317-439 A.D.)

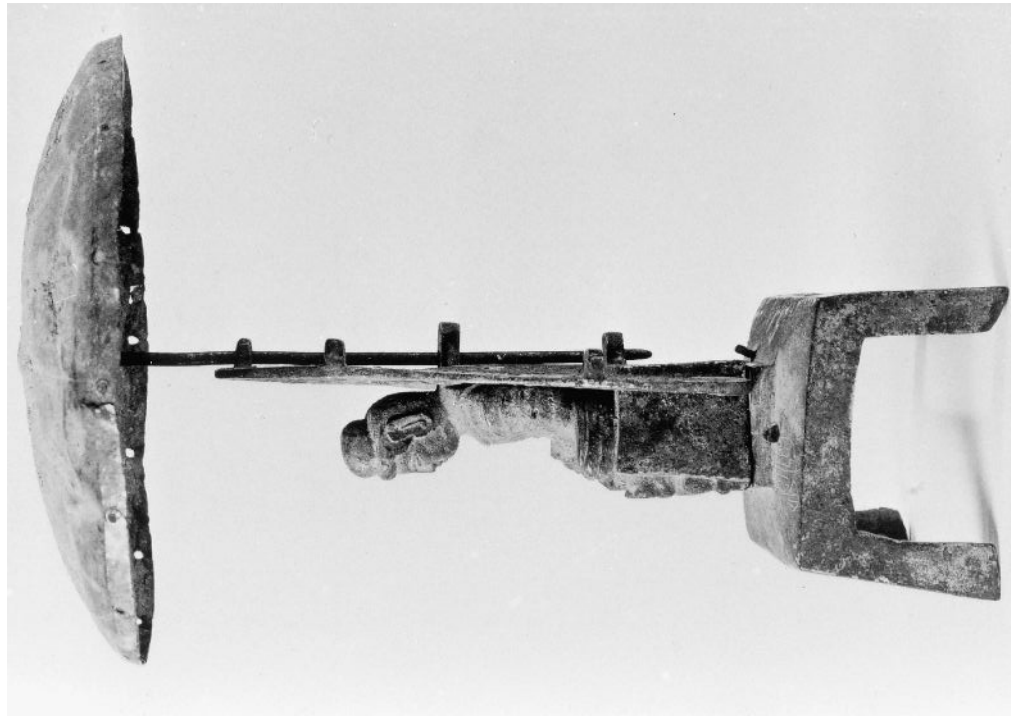


Figs. 2.1a-f Seated dhyanāsana Buddha with mandorla, canopy and 4-footed stand, from Ching-ch'uan hsien, eastern Kansu, gilt bronze, Kansu sheng po-wu-kuan collection, Lan chow:  
a) front view

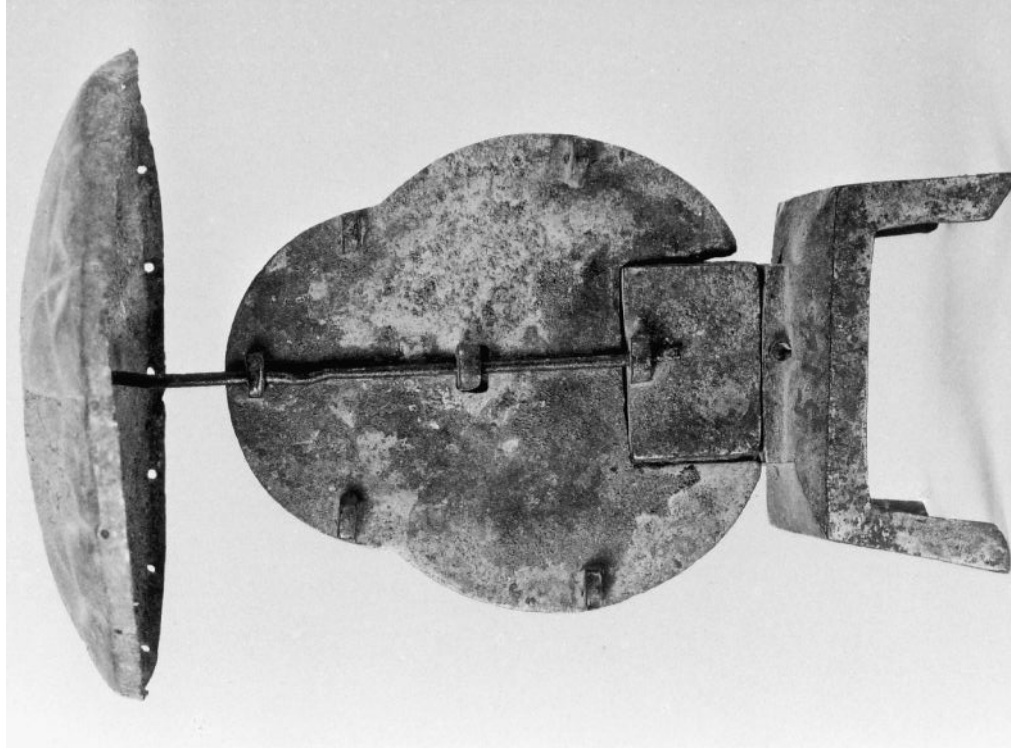


Fig. 2.1 b) angle view showing underside of canopy

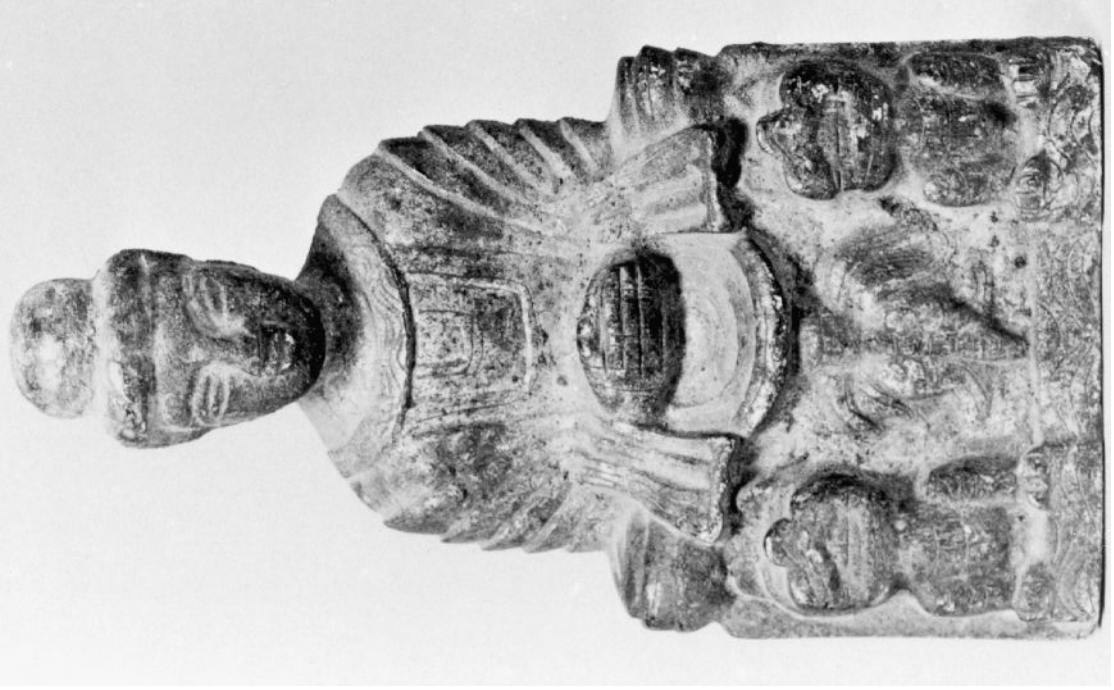




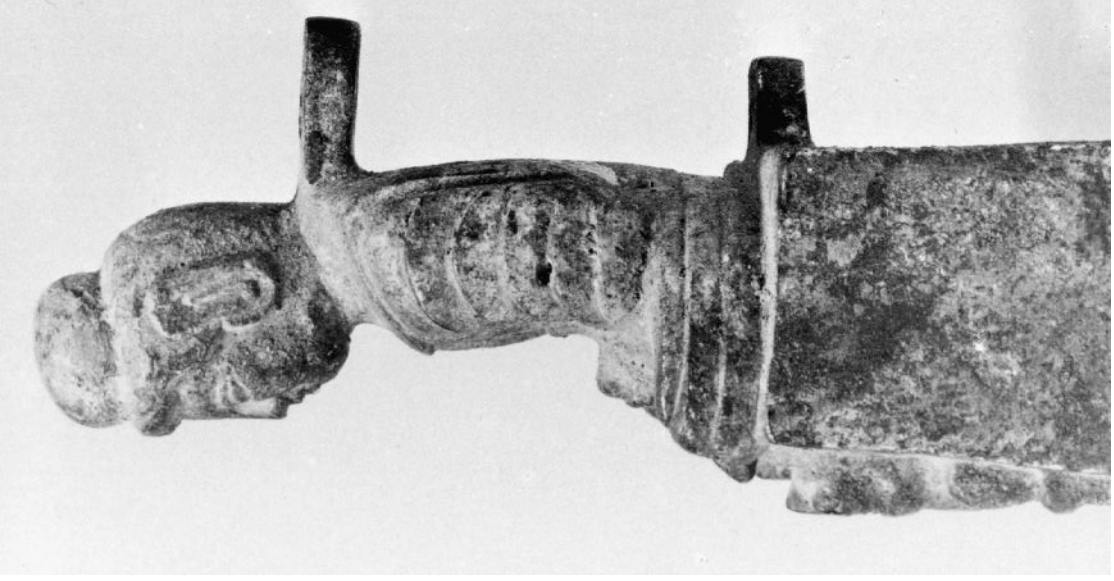
Figs. 2.1 c) side view



Figs. 2.1 d) back view



Figs. 2.1 e) Buddha/pedestal unit



Figs. 2.1 f) side view of Buddha/pedestal unit



Fig. 2.2 Seated Buddha, dated Later Chao Chien-wu 4<sup>th</sup> year (338 A.D.), gilt bronze, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco



Fig. 2.3 Standing Bodhisattva, probably Maitreya, gilt bronze, Ku-kung po-wu-kuan, Beijing



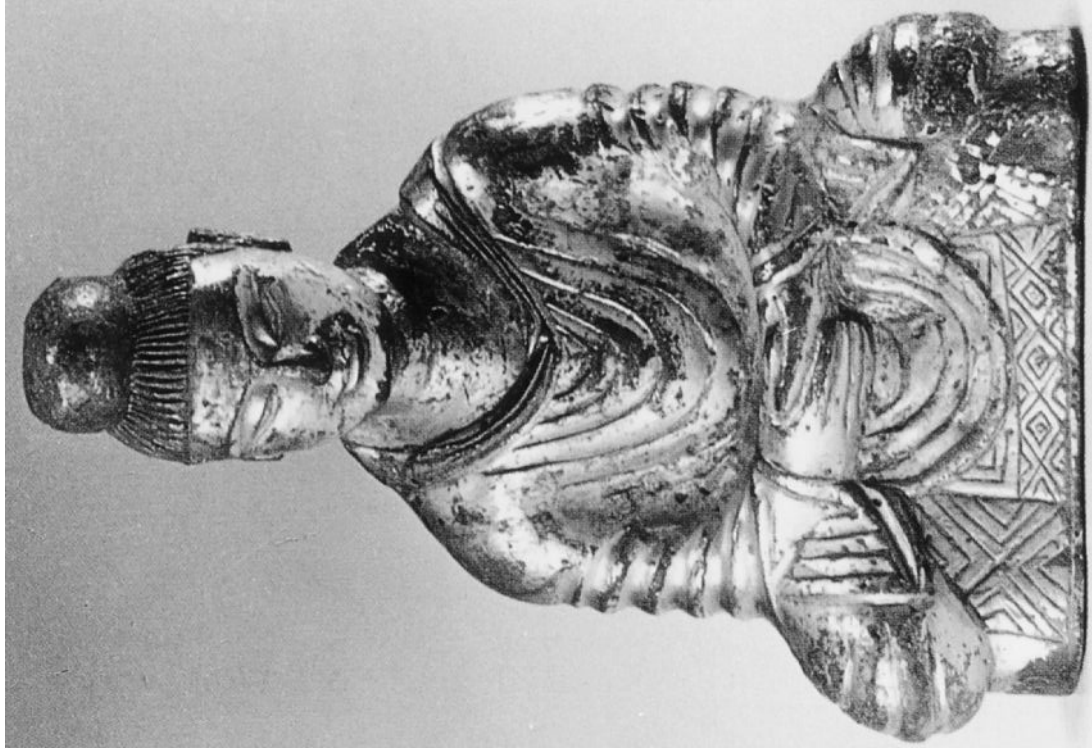


Fig. 2.4 Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā with Kharoṣṭhī inscription, ca. 360's-370's, gilt bronze, found in Sian, Sian Municipal Cultural Relics Association

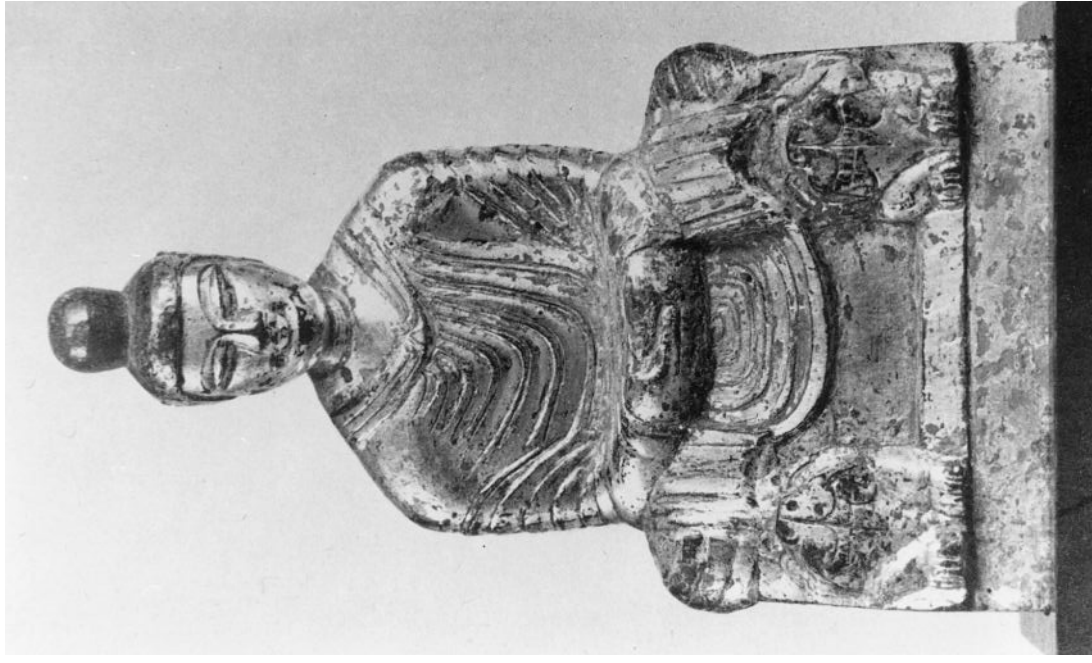


Fig. 2.5 Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, gilt bronze



Fig. 2.6 Seated dayānāsana Buddha with mandorla from Pao-ting, Hopei, gilt bronze

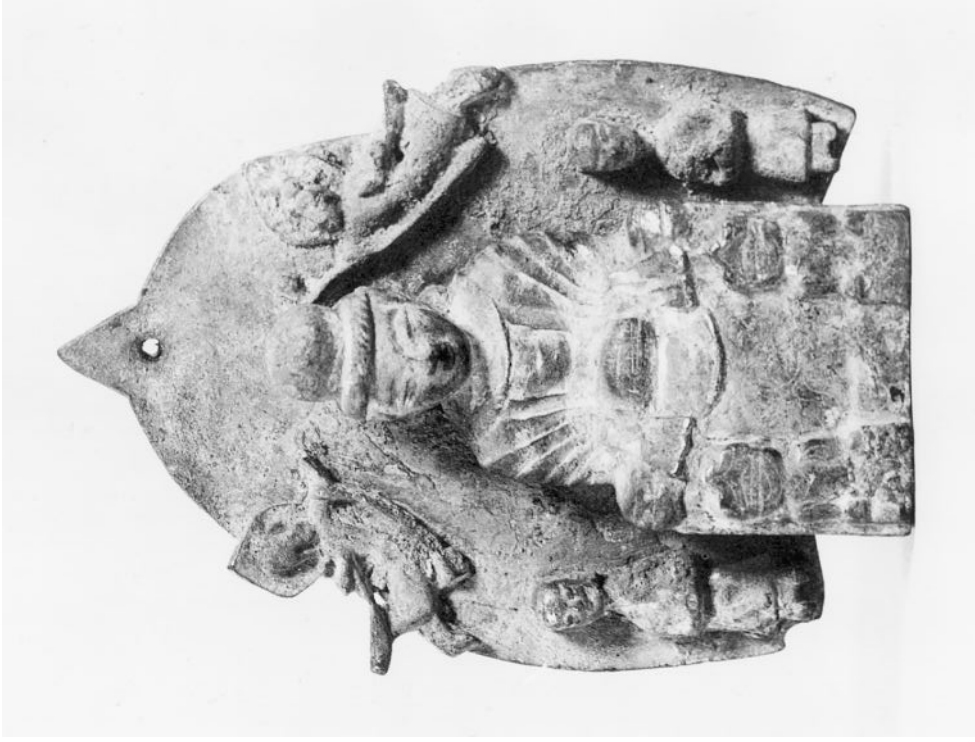


Fig. 2.7 Seated dhyānāsana Buddha with mandorla, gilt bronze, Tokyo Bijutsu Daigaku



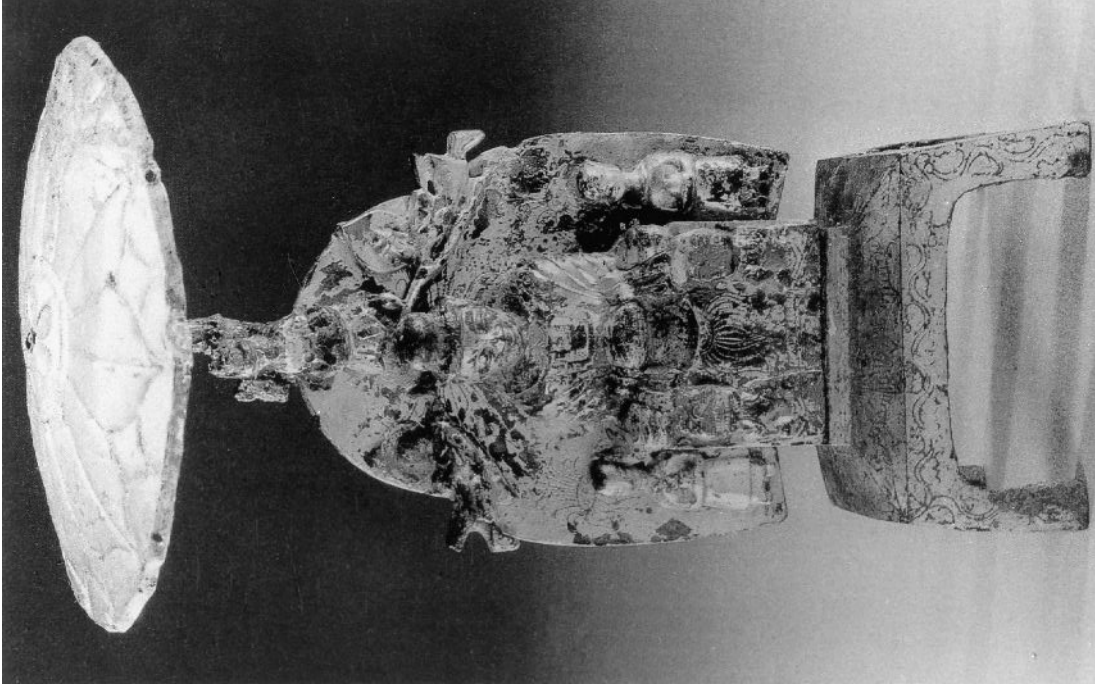


Fig. 2.8 Altar with dhyanāsana Buddha, mandorla, canopy, and 4-footed stand, gilt bronze, Hopei Provincial Museum



Fig. 2.9 Altar with dhyanāsana Buddha with mandorla and 4-footed stand, gilt bronze, Ku-kung po-wu-kuan, Beijing



Fig. 2.10 Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā with 4-footed stand, from Hsi-kuan ch'eng, I-hsien, Hopei, gilt bronze





Fig. 2.11 Altar with seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā with large mandorla and 4-footed stand, from Hopei, early 5<sup>th</sup> century, gilt bronze, Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo



Fig. 2.12 Standing Bodhisattva (probably Kuan-shih-yin), China, gilt bronze, early 5<sup>th</sup> century (ca. 400 A.D.), Asian Art Museum of San Francisco



Fig. 2.13 Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā, gilt bronze, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City



Fig. 2.14 Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā, inscribed and dated Sheng-kuang 2<sup>nd</sup> year (429) of the T'a Hsia, gilt bronze, Osaka Municipal Museum, Osaka, Japan



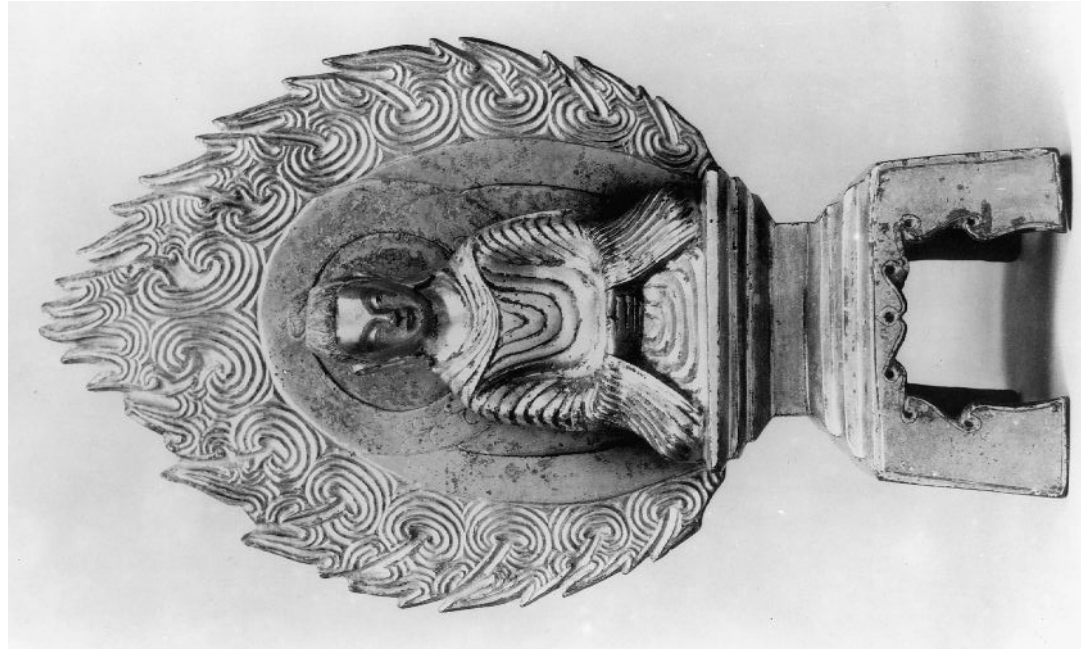


Fig. 2.15 Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā, inscribed and dated 437 A.D. ([Liu] Sung Yüan-chia 14<sup>th</sup> year), gilt bronze



Fig. 2.16 Seated dhyānāsana Buddha from Ching-ch'uan hsien, eastern Kansu, detail of Buddha/pedestal unit and mandorla



Fig. 2.17a Fragment of a seated Buddha, clay, Complex C, Kara-tepe, near Termez, southern Uzbekistan

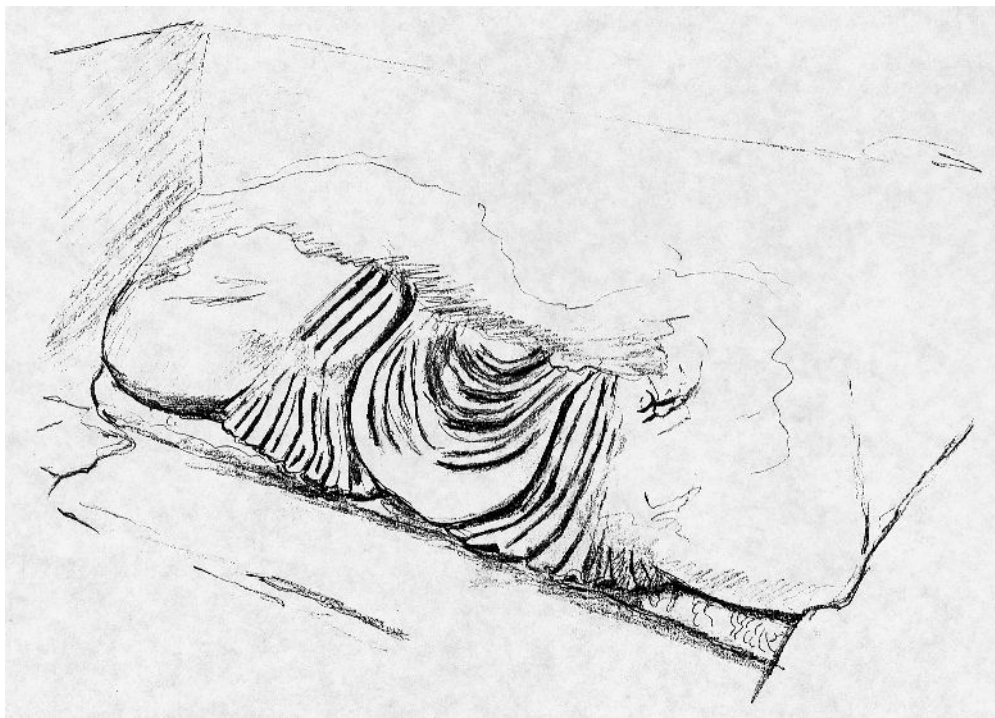


Fig. 2.17b Drawing of the seated Buddha in Fig. 2.17a





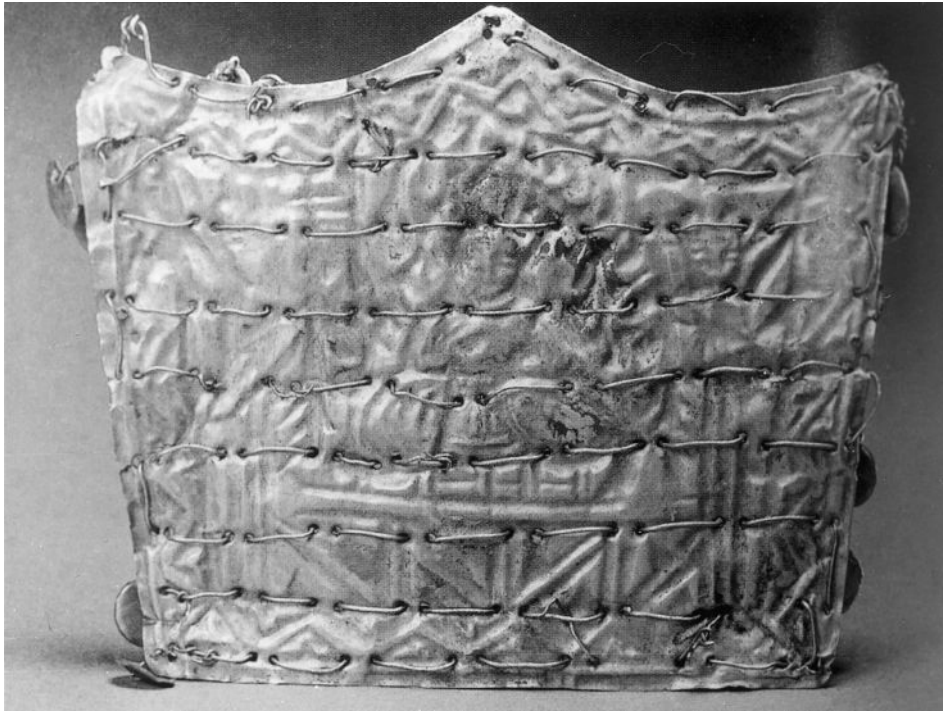
Fig. 2.18 Fragment of a mandorla with seated dharmachakra Buddha on lotus pedestal with rayed body and head halos, from the entrance area, site (R), Duldul-Akur, Kucha, wood, Musée Guimet, Paris



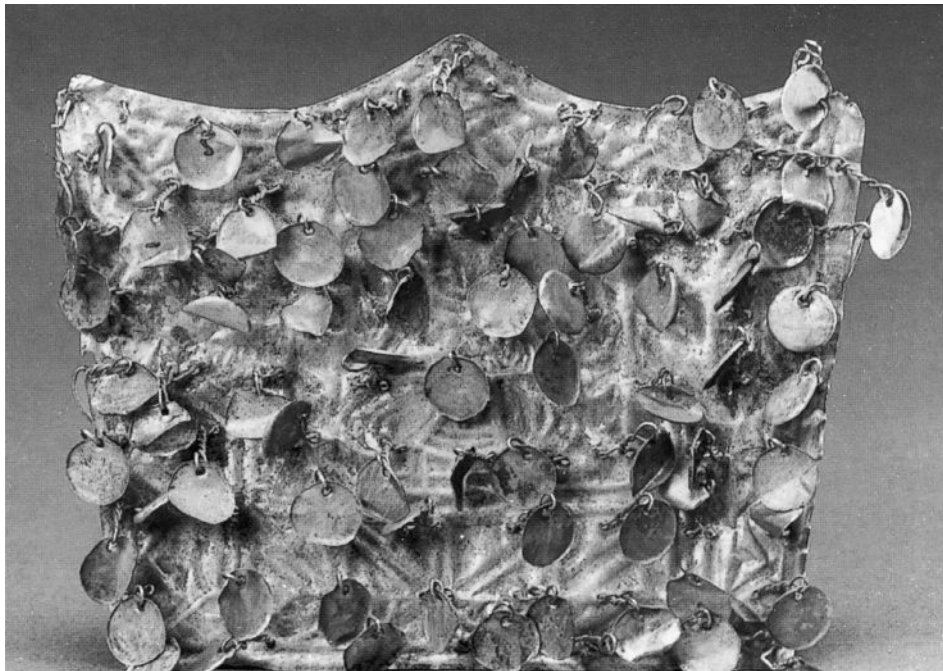
→  
Fig. 2.19 Mandorla from the Ching-ch'uan altar in Fig. 2.1a



Fig. 2.20 Detail of wooden lintel with Buddha niches, L. A. area, Lou-lan (Hedin's site F, Stein's site II), ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., carved poplar wood, Folkens Museum Etnografiska, Stockholm, detail of 3<sup>rd</sup> Buddha from the right



Figs. 2.21a, b Hat ornament with Buddha image and disk pendants, gold, Northern Yen (407-436), from the tomb of Feng Hsü-fu (d. 415 A.D.), Pei-p'iao, Liaoning (northeastern China); a) back



Figs. 2.21 b) front



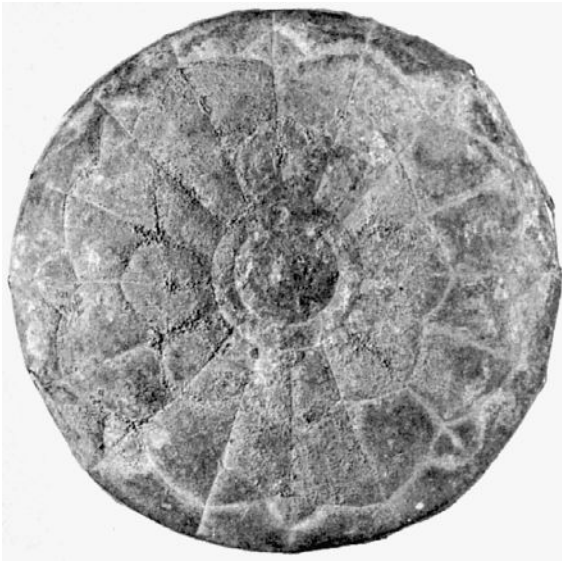


Fig. 2.22a Topside of the canopy of the Ching-ch'uan altar in Fig. 2.1a

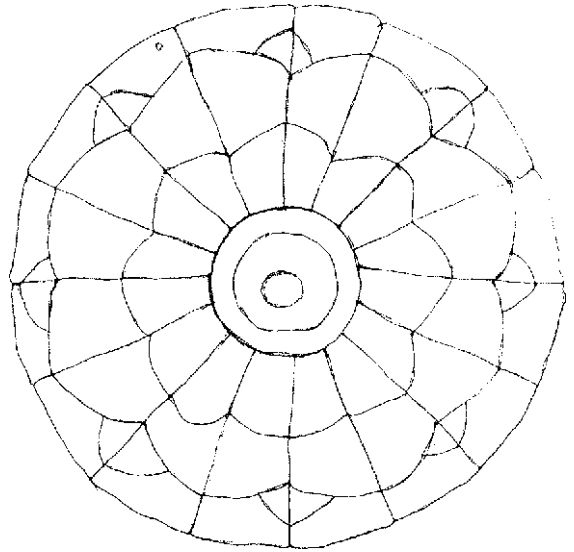


Fig. 2.22b Drawing of Fig. 2.22a



Fig. 2.23 Topside of the canopy of the Hopei Provincial Museum altar in Fig. 2.8



Fig. 2.24a Detail of the 4-footed stand of the Ching-ch'uan altar in Fig. 2.1a

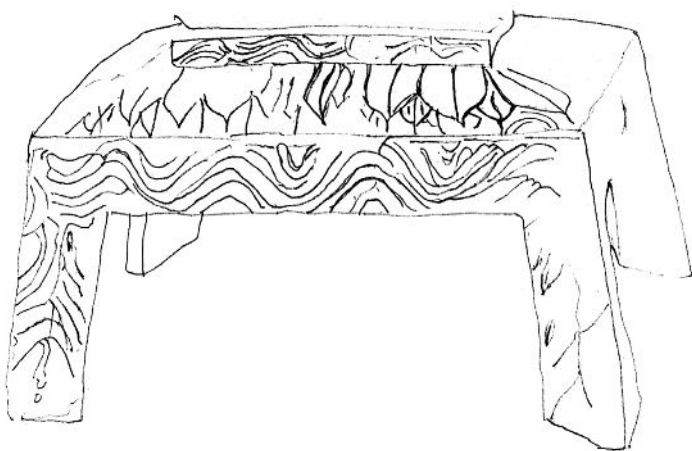


Fig. 2.24b Drawing of Fig. 2.24a



Fig. 2.25 Bronze seal with recumbent horse and "kuei-i" seal, from the Ching-ch'uan hoard of bronze objects, eastern Kansu

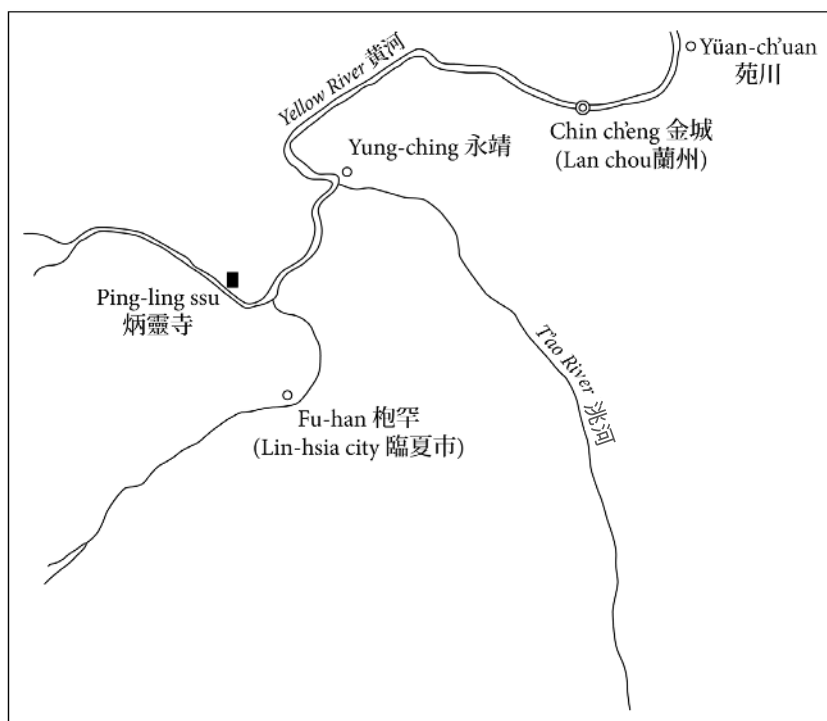


Fig. 3.1 Map of the area near Ping-ling ssu, eastern Kansu province

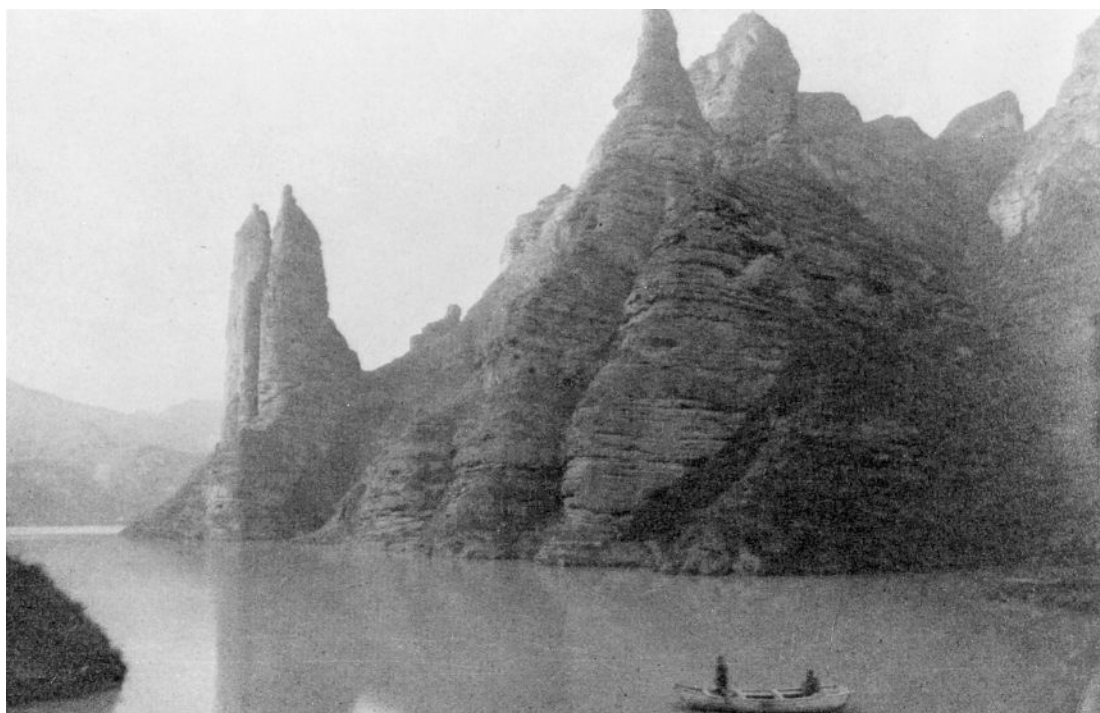


Fig. 3.2 View of the site at Ping-ling ssu showing Twin Sister Peaks



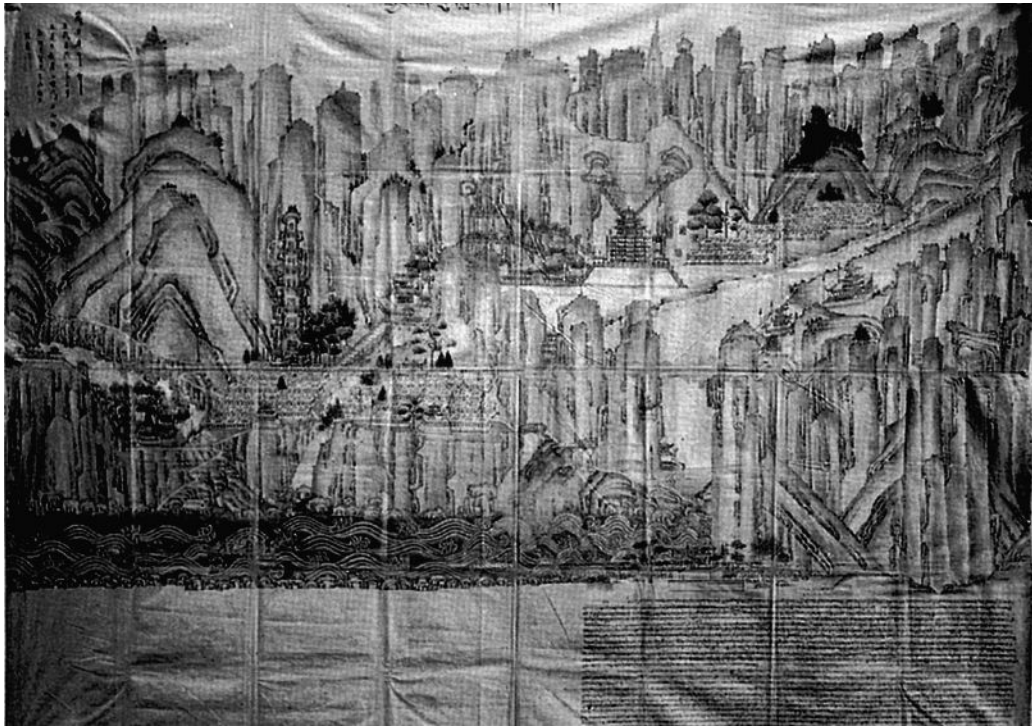


Fig. 3.3 Drawing of Ping-ling ssu, Ch'ing dynasty, Ping-ling ssu shih-k'u wen-wu pao-kuan-so collection

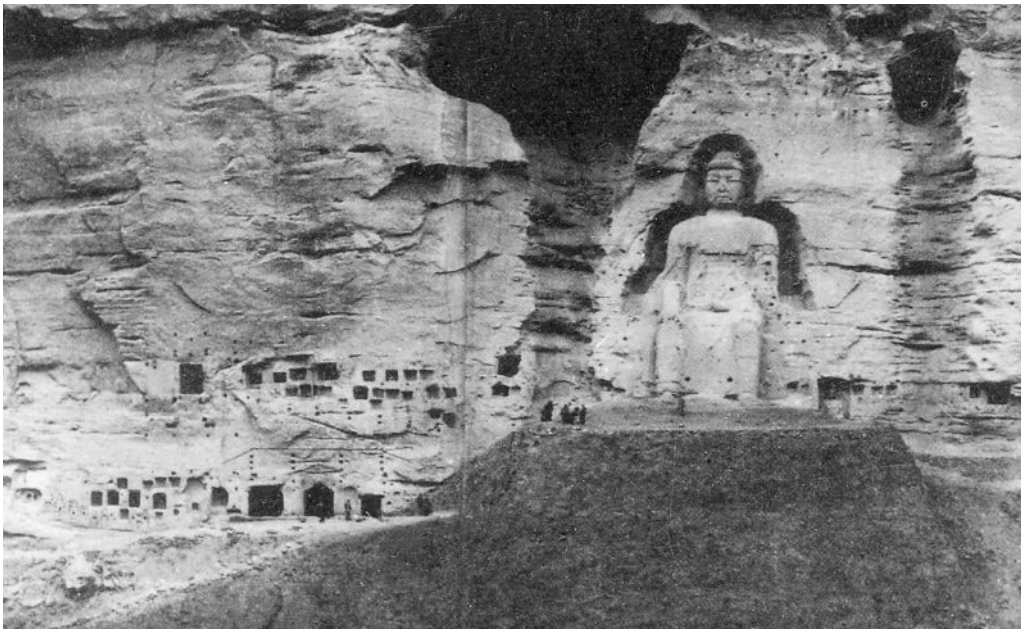


Fig. 3.4 Panoramic view of the upper part of Ping-ling ssu cliff with the colossal seated Buddha and Cave 169, prior to flooding of the valley



Fig. 3.5 Drawing of the cave site at Ping-ling ssu by Hsia Tung-kwang, detail showing Niche No. 1 in its original location

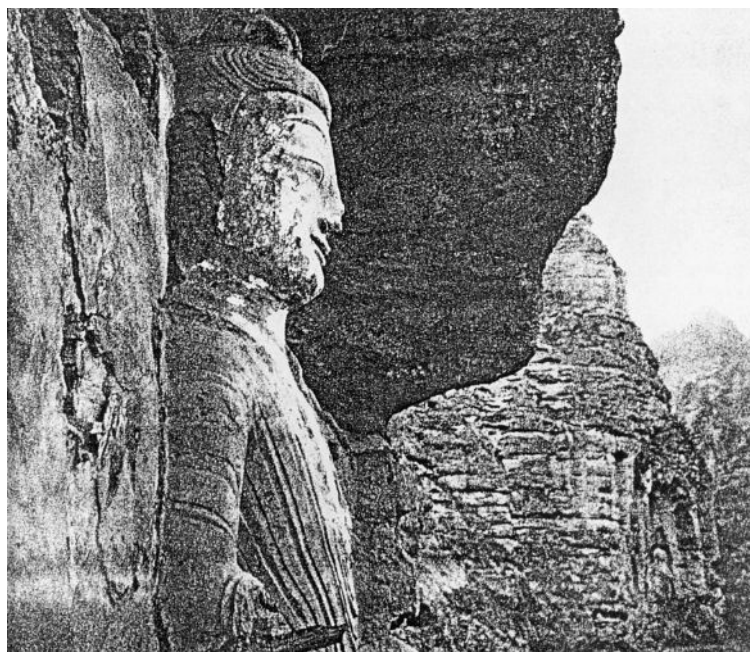


Fig. 3.6 Niche No. 1 with view of the colossal Buddha and Cave 169 in the distance, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 3.7 Niche No. 1 at Ping-ling ssu, front view prior to the removal of the two Ming period standing attendant Bodhisattvas



Fig. 3.8 View of Niche No. 1 prior to removal of the Ming dynasty stucco on the standing Buddha and the two Ming dynasty standing attendant Bodhisattvas



Fig. 3.9 Standing Buddha, Niche No. 1, Ping-ling ssu, H. 4 m, stucco over stone core, original image, early Western Ch'in, ca. 375-385 A.D.



Fig. 3.10 Detail of upper body, Niche No. 1 Buddha in Fig. 3.9



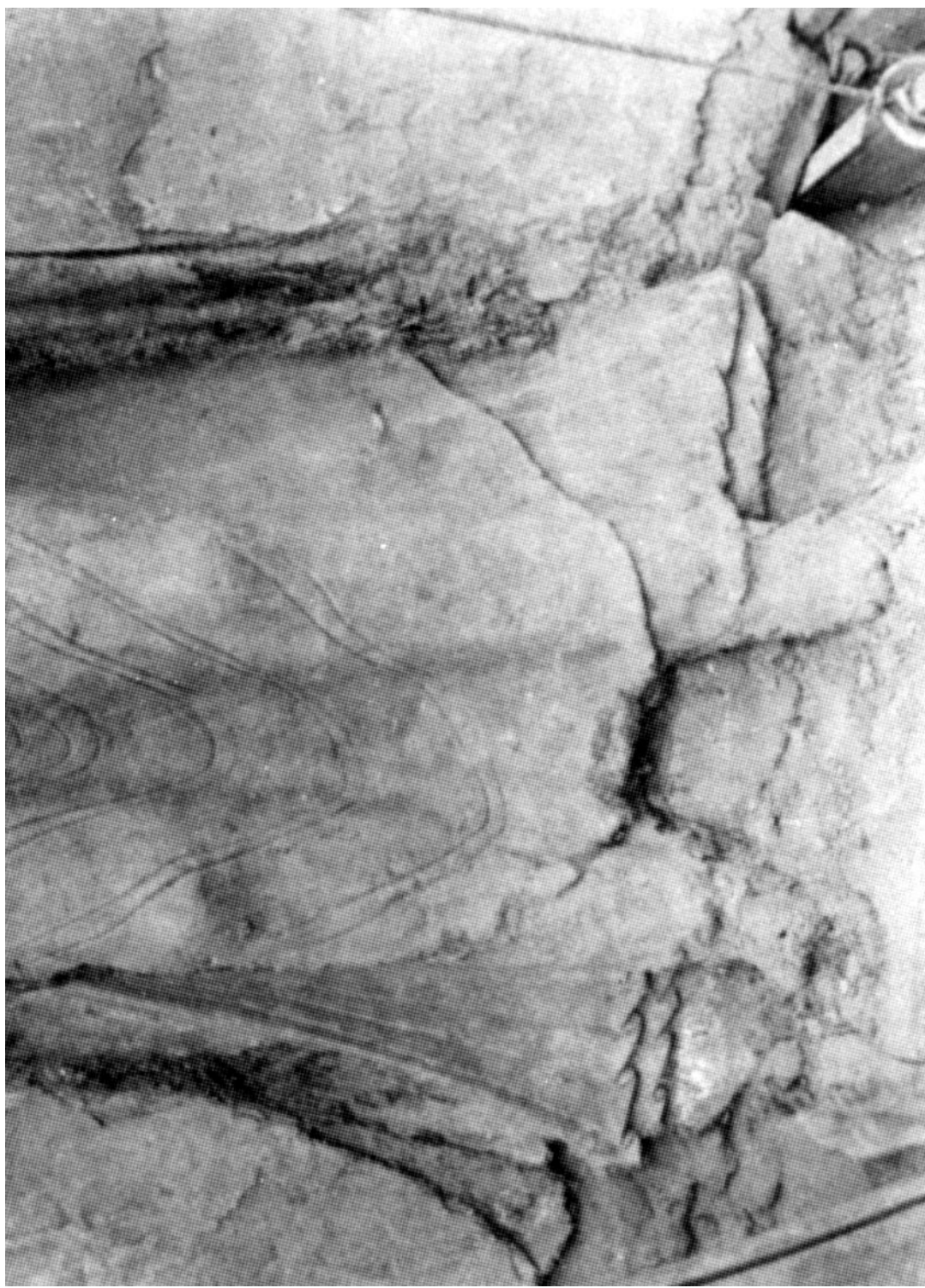


Fig. 3.11 Detail of lower body, Niche No. 1 Buddha in Fig. 3.9



Fig. 3.12 Standing Buddha of Niche No. 1, Ping-ling ssu





←

Fig. 3.13 Standing Buddha, inscribed “made nine images”, gilt bronze, ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Kyoto National Museum



Fig. 3.14a Relief with standing Buddha (with Mara and his daughters), Gandhara, probably ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, private collection, Japan



Fig. 3.14b Relief with the seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva, stone base for holding a stone statue, *in situ* in shrine "c", Southeast Stupa Court XIVii, Takht-i-Bahi, Gandhara, ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century





Fig. 3.15 Eastern Great Buddha, 38 meters, Cave 155, Bāmiyān, Afghanistan, possibly 4<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 3.16 Standing Buddha (R.9), Style I, inner southwest wall, Rawak Stupa Court, Khotan, clay, over life size, ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.





Fig. 3.17 Standing Buddha inscribed "King Aśoka image" (A-yü-wang hsiang) from a hoard of stone sculptures, Ch'eng-tu, Szechwan, dated 551 A.D.



→  
Fig. 3.18 Standing Buddha, "from the small ruin to the west of the Pelliot ruin," Tumshuk-Tagh, Tumshuk, Central Asia, wood, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 3.19 Maitreya Buddha, bronze, 443 A.D., Northern Wei, private collection, Japan



Fig. 3.20a Maitreya Bodhisattva teaching in Tusita Heaven, wall painting in the lunette, front wall, Cave 38 (Cave of the Musicians), Kizil, Kucha, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.





Fig. 3.20b Detail of Maitreya Bodhisattva in Fig. 3.20a



Fig. 3.21 Detail of Buddha,  
wall painting, forecourt,  
Cave 165, Bamiyān

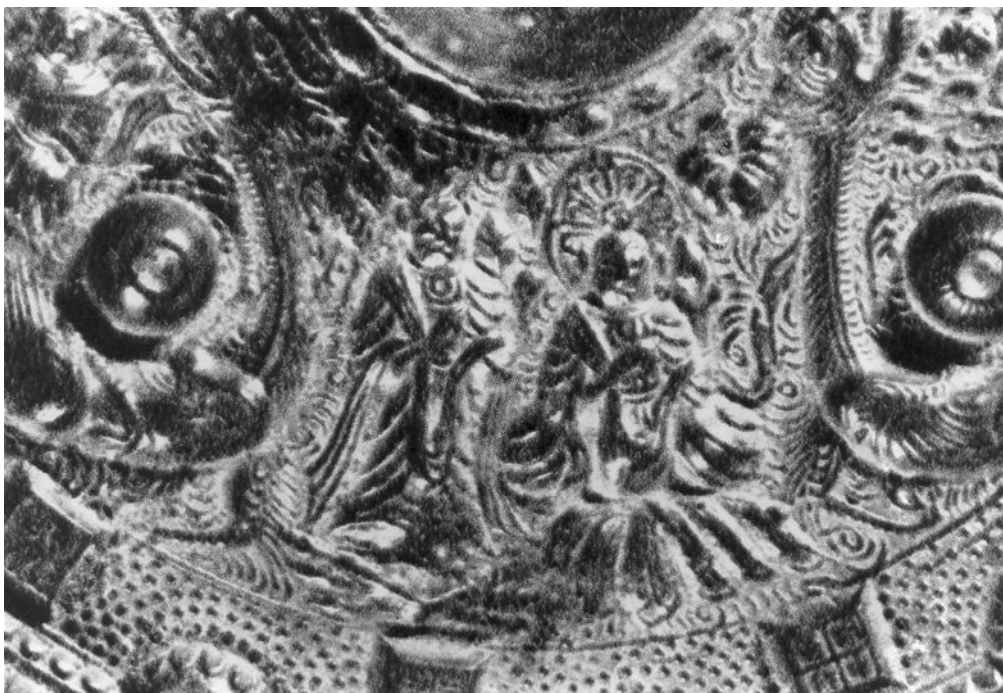


Fig. 3.22 Mirror with design of Four-Buddhist/Four-Animal groups, ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, bronze, formerly in the Kongōrinji, detail of Group “C”



Fig. 3.23 Mirror with design of Four-Buddhist/Four-Animal groups, ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, bronze, formerly in the Kongōrinji, detail of Group “D”





Fig. 3.24 Two colossal clay Buddha heads, M II, Miran, Shan-shan kingdom, eastern Central Asia

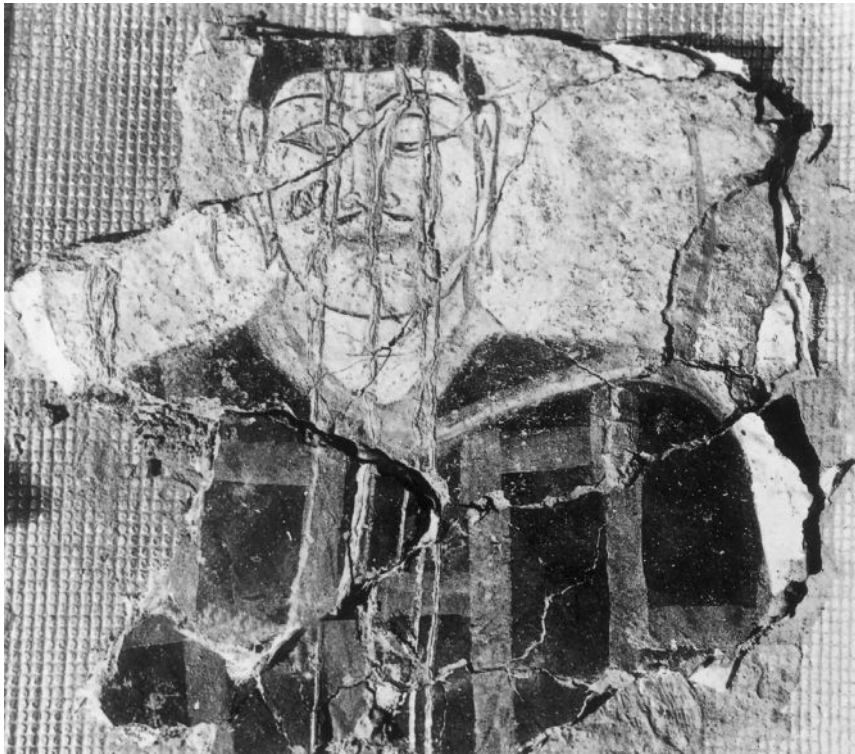


Fig. 3.25 Fragment of a wall painting of Buddha with patched robe, from Niya, Southern Silk Road, Central Asia, ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century

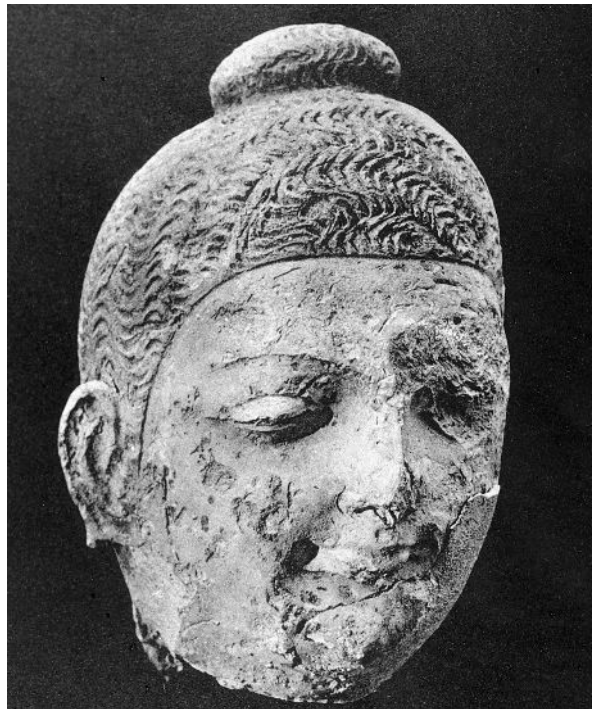




Fig. 3.26 Dīpaṃkara Buddha, from Swat, ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., stone



Fig. 3.27 Wall painting fragment with seated Buddha in a panel, Temple A, Kara-dong, Southern Silk Road, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century



→  
Fig. 3.28 Buddha head, probably from Temple “J”, Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk, Northern Silk Road, hardened clay, Musée Guimet, Paris

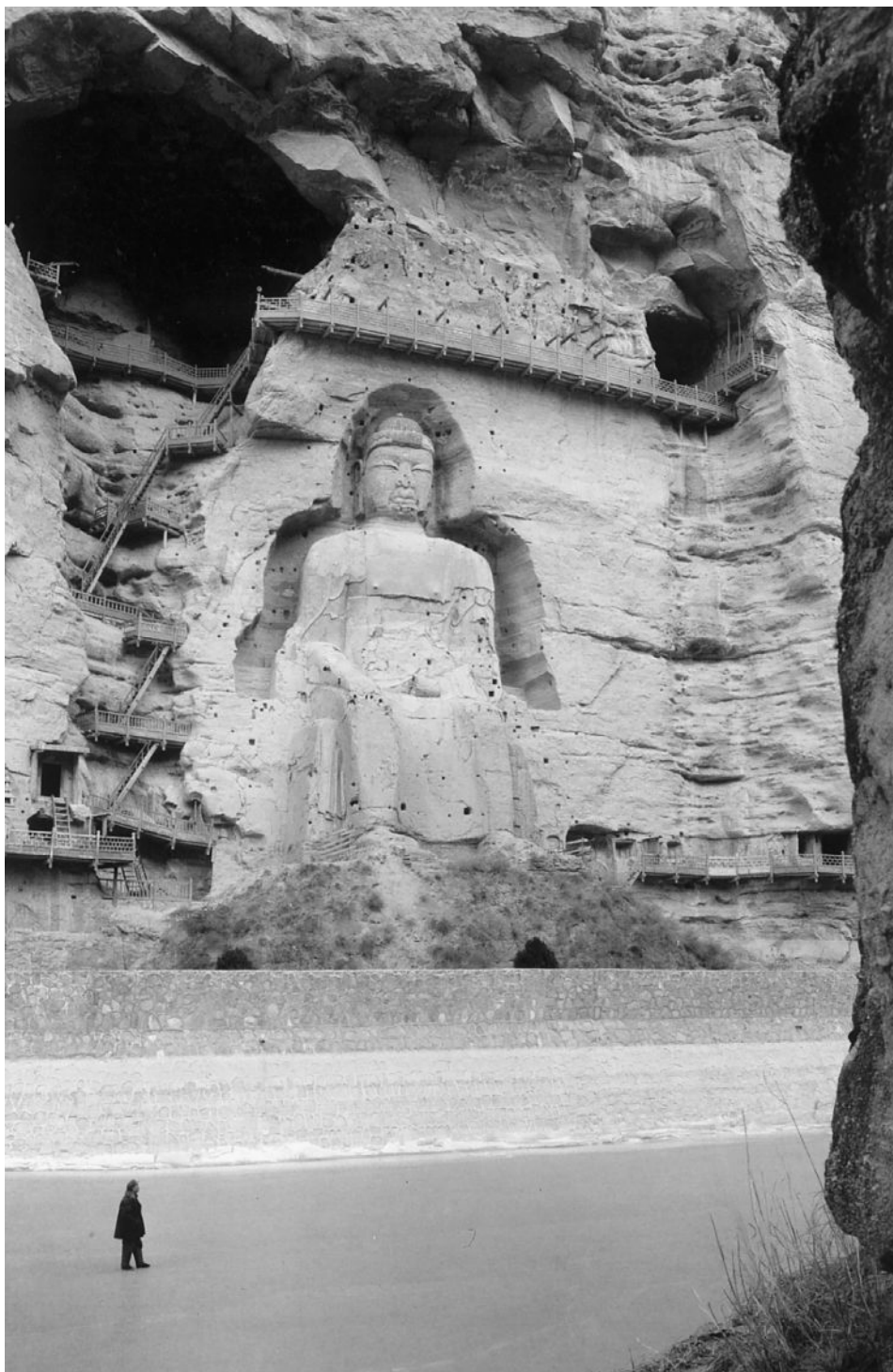


Fig. 4.1a View of the colossal Buddha and Cave 169 , Ping-ling ssu, eastern Kansu

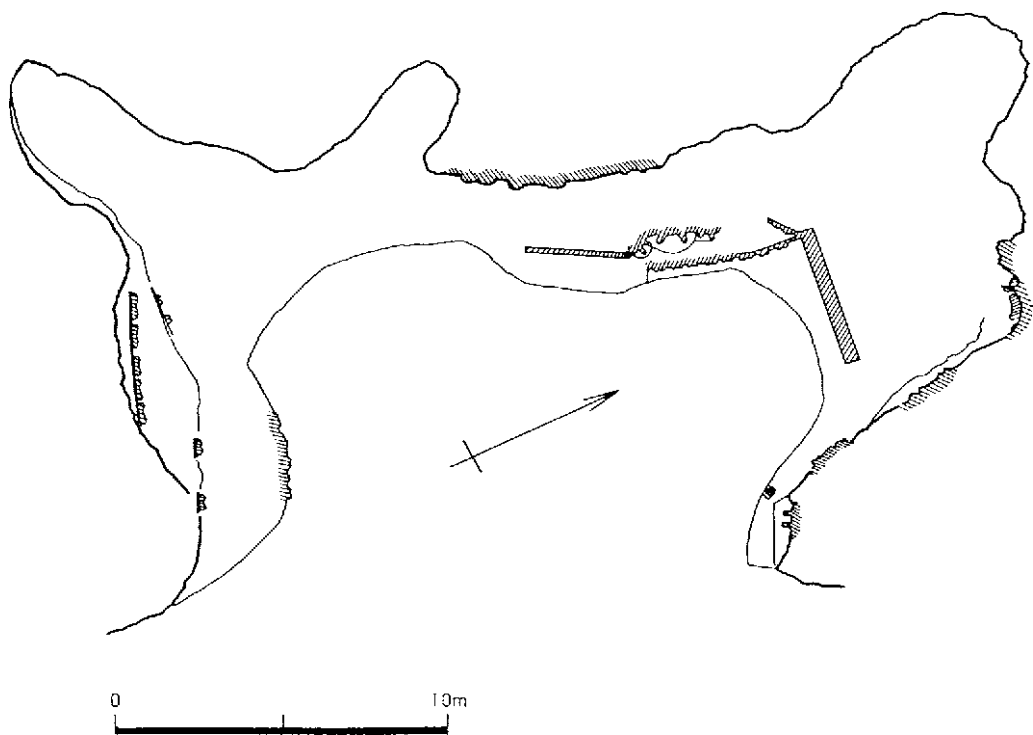


Fig. 4.1b Plan of Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, eastern Kansu

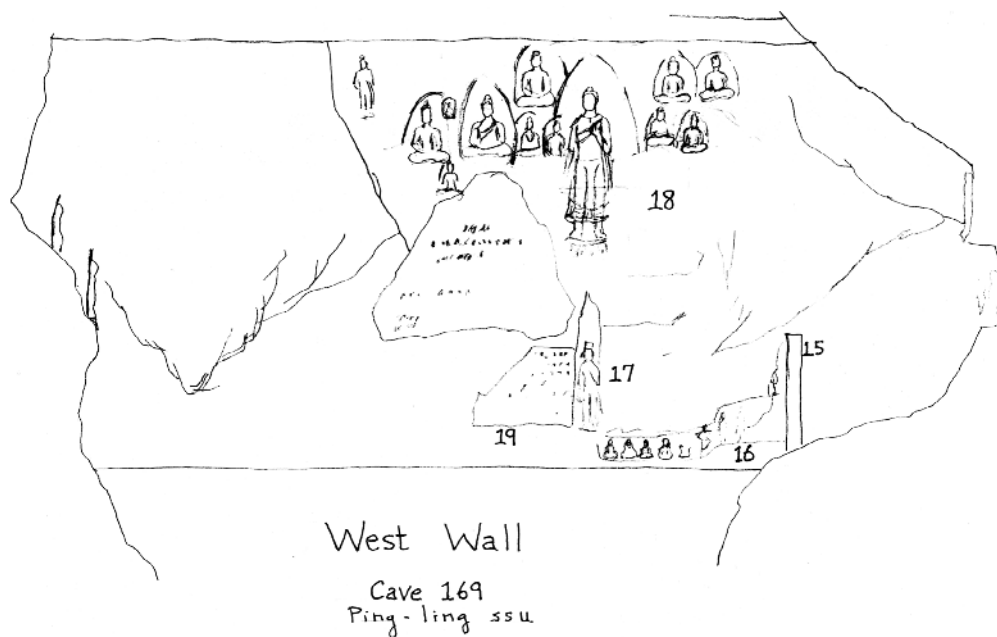


Fig. 4.2 Diagram of image placements and Groups, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 4.3 Upper portion of the West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 4.4 Group 18, upper portion of West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, relief sculptures of stone core with stucco





Fig. 4.5 Drawing of the standing Buddha and seated Buddhas of Group 18, upper portion of West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

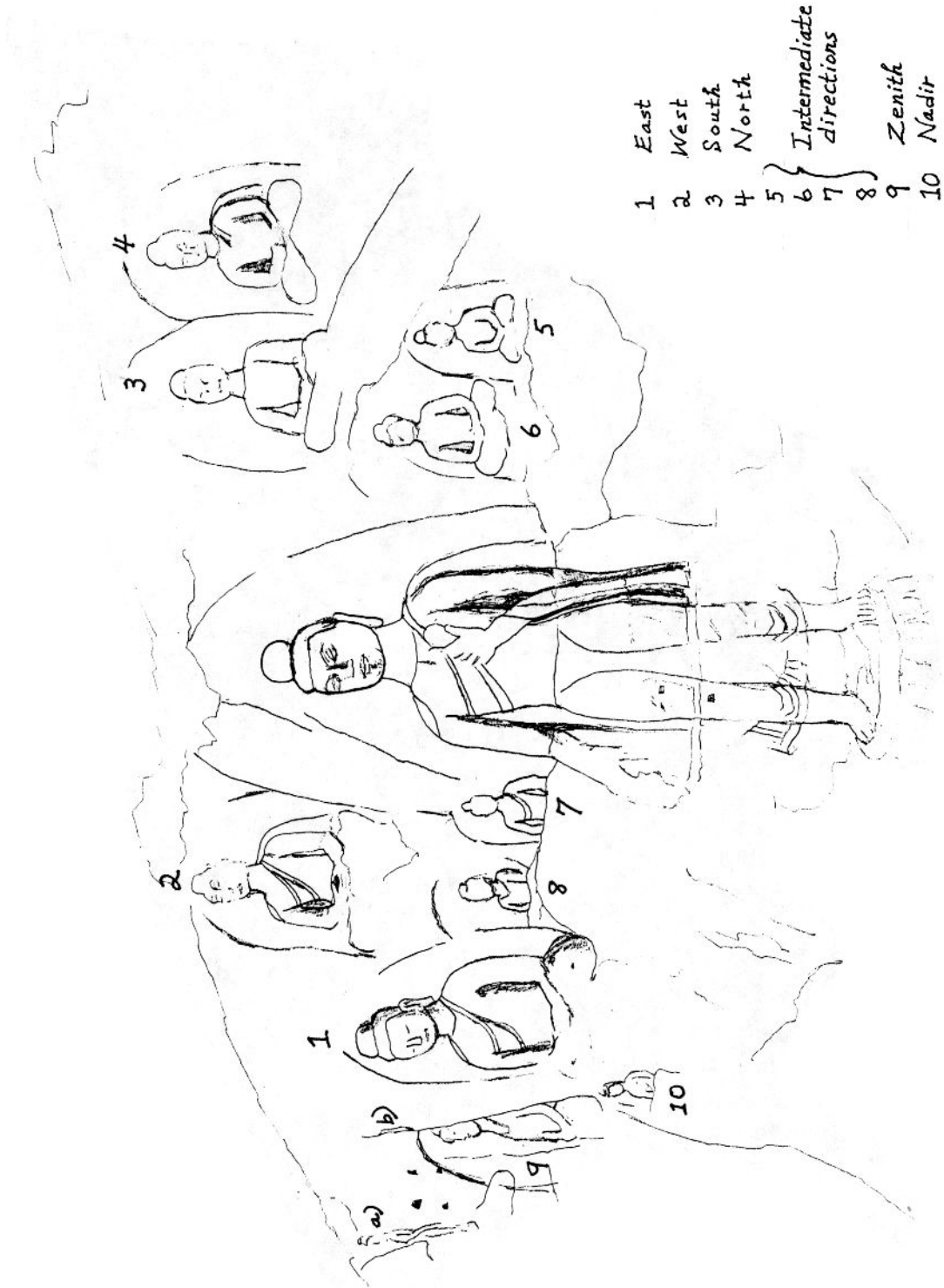


Fig. 4.6 Drawing in Fig. 4.5 with the addition of identifying numbers



Fig. 4.7 Standing Buddha at the center of Group 18, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, stone core with stucco



Fig. 4.8 Drawing of the standing Buddha in Fig. 4.7





Fig. 4.9 Detail of the lower portion of the standing Buddha in Fig. 4.7

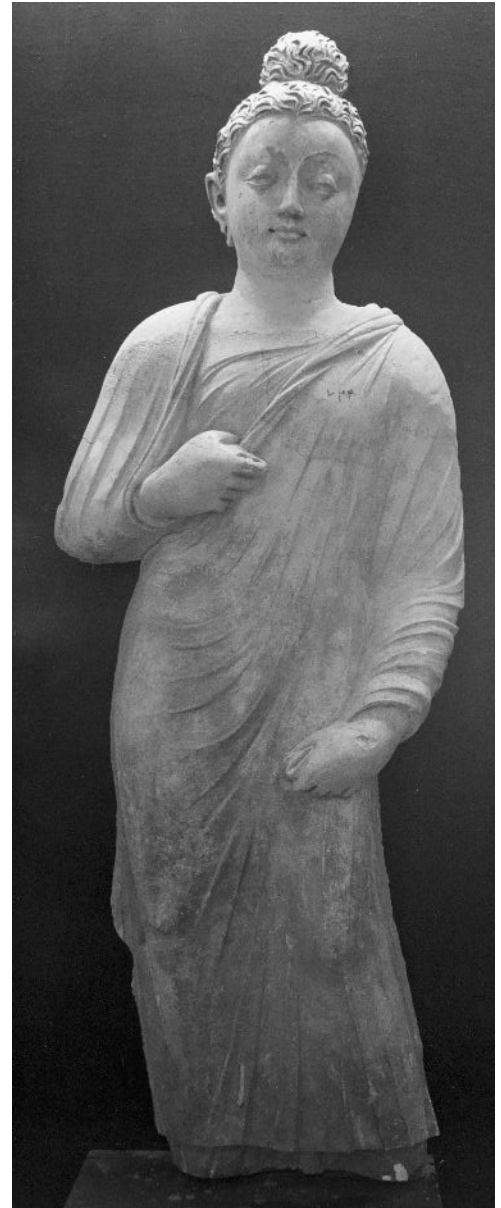


Fig. 4.10 Standing Maitreya Buddha (inscribed) with large mandorla, gilt bronze, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City





Fig. 4.11 Detail of teaching Buddha, wall painting, Cave 84 (Treasure Cave B), Kizil, Kucha, early 4<sup>th</sup> century, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



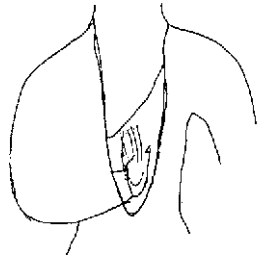
→  
Fig. 4.12 Standing Buddha, clay and stucco, Haḍḍa, Afghanistan, now in Kabul Museum



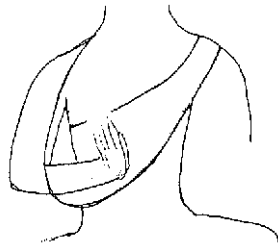
Fig. 4.13 Jataka scenes and meditating monks, detail of ceiling, right side of left passage, Cave 77 (Cave of the Statues), Kizil, Kucha



Fig. 4.14 Panel with seated Buddha and monks, Cave 212 (Cave of the Seafarers), Kizil, Kucha, now Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



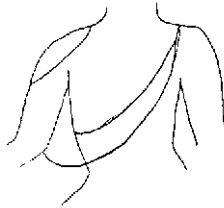
a) full sling



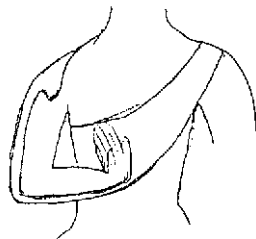
b) half sling



c) open sling with rim

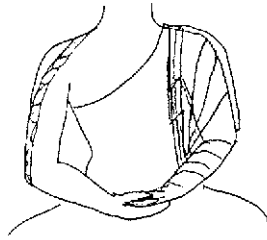


d) open sling with shoulder cap



e) open sling with shoulder cap and rim

Figs. 4.15a, b Drawing of modes of wearing the Buddha's robe as seen in 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century seated Buddha images in China; a



f)



g)



h)



i)

Fig. 4.15b





Fig. 4.16 Relief of a standing Buddha and worshippers, from Niche Q1, Great Stupa 4, Butkara I, Swat, Pakistan, schist, ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.17 Standing Buddha from the stupa court, Western Group, Tumshuk-Tagh, Tumshuk, wood, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 4.18 Fragment No. 161 (lower legs and drapery of a standing clay figure), Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk



↑  
Fig. 4.19 Seated Buddha in abhaya mudra, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, gilt bronze, formerly Nitta collection



Fig. 4.20 Detail of Maitreya teaching in Tusita Heaven, wall painting, left wall of left passage, Cave 77 (Cave of the Statues), Kizil, Kucha



↑  
Fig. 4.21 Standing Buddha with mandorla and lotus pedestal, from Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, wood, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 4.22a Jataka, ceiling of main room, Cave 38 (Cave of the Musicians), ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Kizil, Kucha



Fig. 4.22b Jataka, ceiling, Cave 14, Kizil, Kucha, ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> – first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.23 Group 18, West Wall, detail of seated Buddhas on south side of the standing Buddha, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

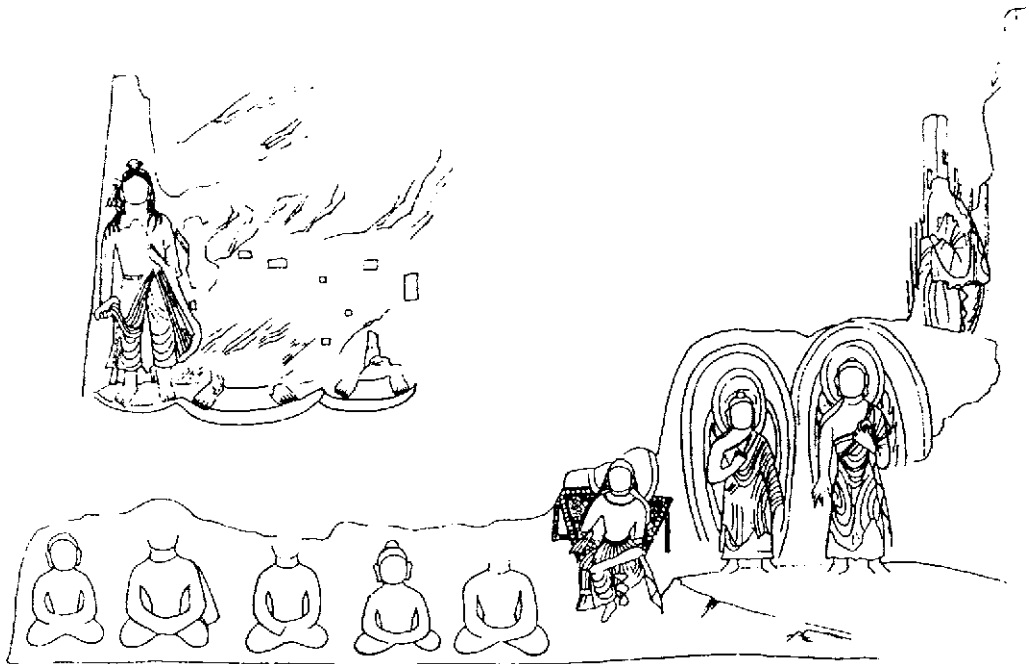


Fig. 4.24 Diagram of Groups 17 and 16, lower portion of the West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 4.25a View of Group 17 and part of Group 16, the lower portion of the central part of the West Wall, Cave 169, Pingling ssu



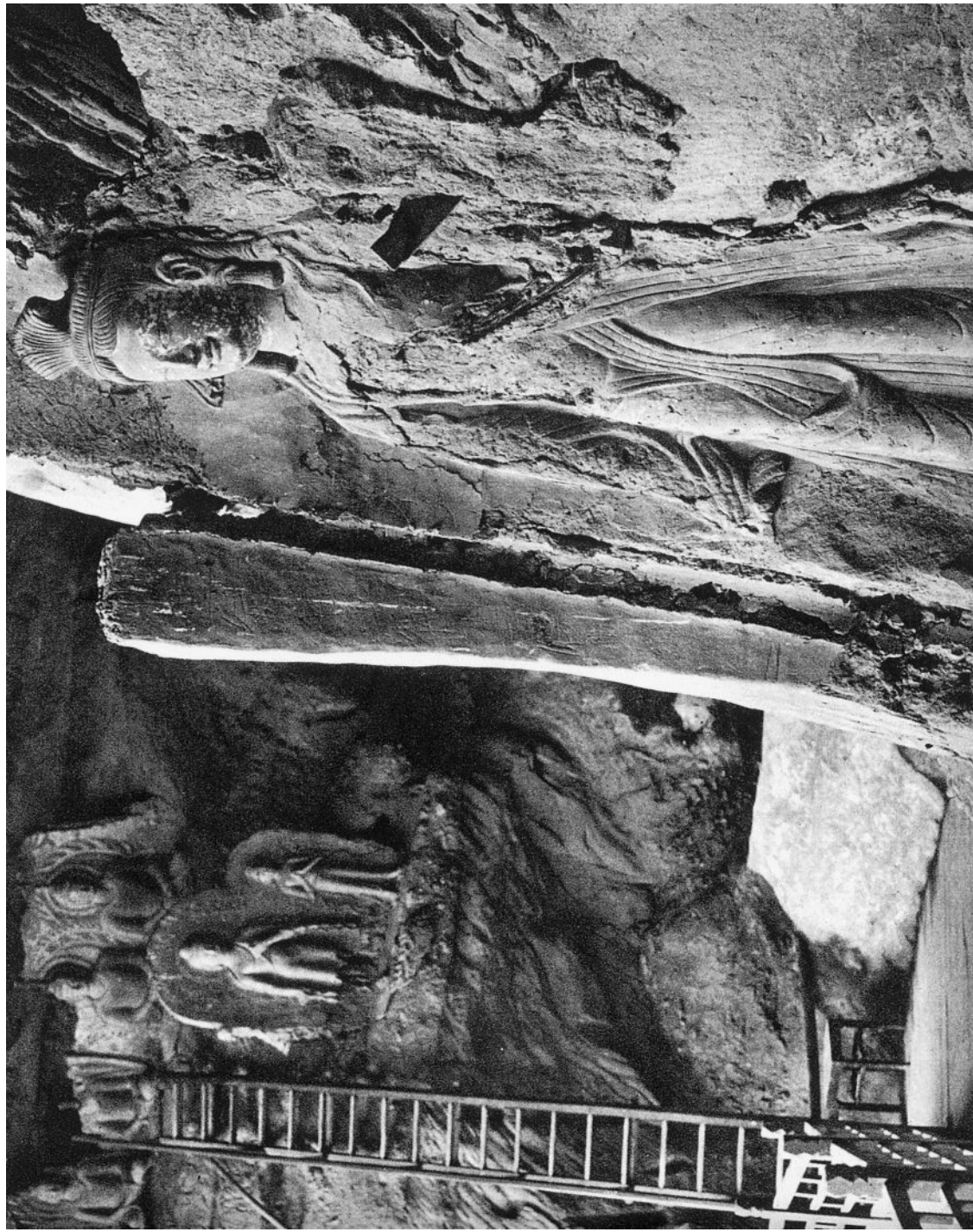


Fig. 4.25b Group 17 standing Bodhisattva with view of the side of the thousand Buddha panel (Group 19), West Wall, Cave 169, Pingling ssu



Fig. 4.26a Group 17 standing Bodhisattva, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 4.26b Drawing of the standing Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.26a



Fig. 4.27 Detail of head and upper torso of standing Bodhisattva, Group 17, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 4.28 Detail of wall painting, main wall, main chamber, Cave 83 (Treasure Cave C), Kizil, Kucha, ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.29 Vertical jamb fragment with two standing Bodhisattva niches, Loulan, L.B.II, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., carved poplar wood, Folkens Museum Etnografiska, Stockholm





Fig. 4.30 Detail of Buddha altar with mandorla and 4-footed stand, gilt bronze, Ku-kung po-wu-kuan, Beijing

Fig. 4.31 Kneeling worshippers (monks?), *in situ*, small Temple "I", Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk





Fig. 4.32 Wall painting, Cave 7, Kizil, Kucha



Fig. 4.33 Head of standing Bodhisattva, Group 17, West Wall, Cave 169, Pingling ssu





Fig. 4.34 Portrait of Chin, master of the tomb, antechamber, tomb at Tõkhungri, North Korea, dated 408/409 A.D.



Fig. 4.35 Detail of standing Bodhisattva, probably Kuan-shih-yin, gilt bronze, ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

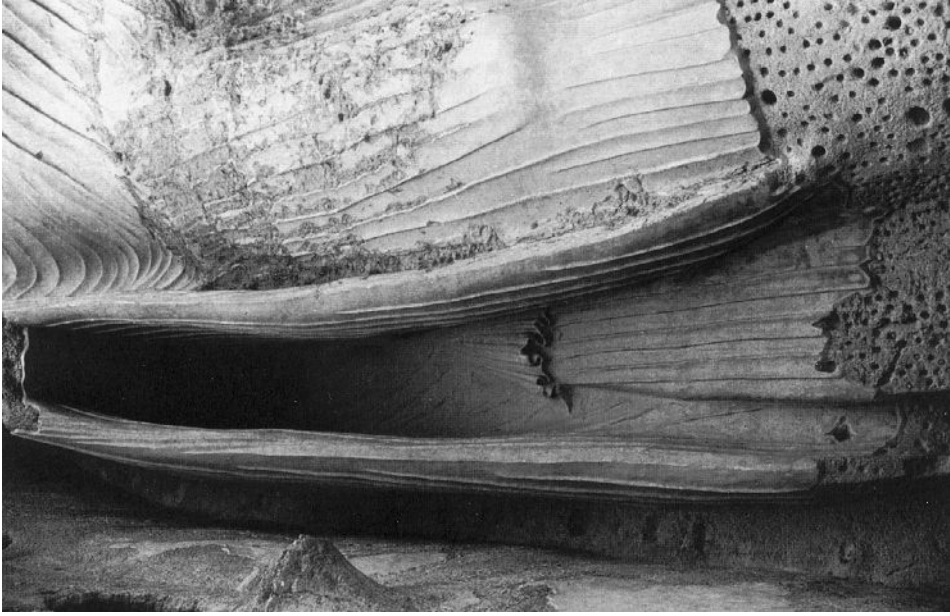


Fig. 4.36 Detail of Eastern Great Buddha, Cave 155, Bamiyān, Afghanistan



Fig. 4.37 Triad of standing Buddha and two standing Bodhisattvas, each in a pillared shrine, stone, Gandhāra, Shitennoji collection, Osaka





Fig. 4.38 Detail of four of the five dhyānasana Buddhas of Group 16, West Wall (lower part), Cave 169, Pingling ssu, stone core



Fig. 4.39 Top part of incense burner with four seated dhyānasana Buddhas, Chü-yung hsien, Kiangsu, Eastern Chin, bronze, now Kiangsu sheng Chen-chiang po-wu-kuan



Fig. 4.40 Contemplative Bodhisattva, Group 16, West Wall (lower part), Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, clay with pigments





Fig. 4.41 Detail of head of Contemplative Bodhisattva in Fig. 4.40



Fig. 4.42 Detail of upper zone of wall painting, lunette, right wall, main chamber, Cave 118, ca. early 4<sup>th</sup> century, Kizil, Kucha

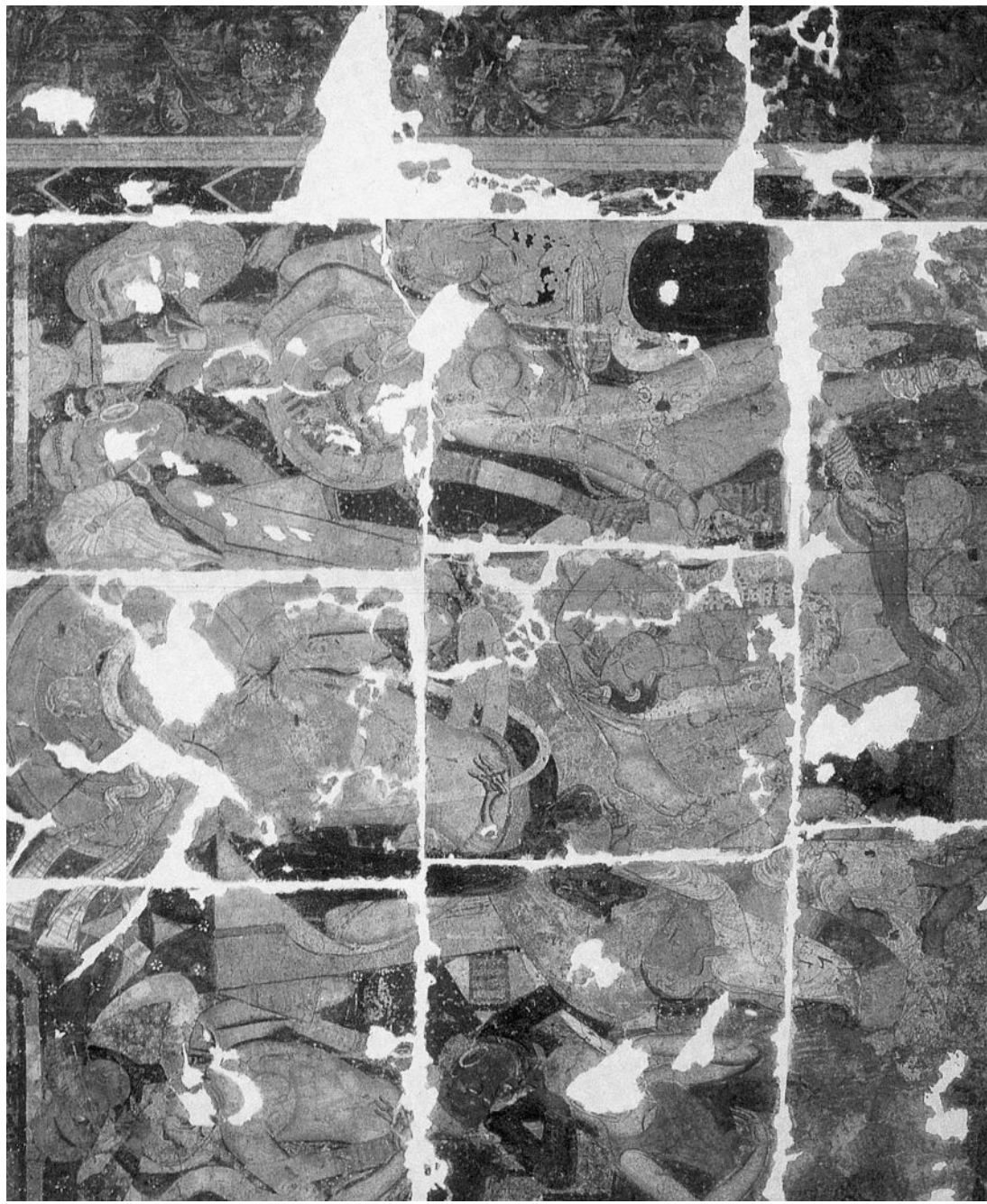


Fig. 4.43 Wall painting of the Rudrayana Avadana, from the main wall, main chamber, Cave 83 (Treasure Cave C), early 4<sup>th</sup> century, Kizil, Kucha, now Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



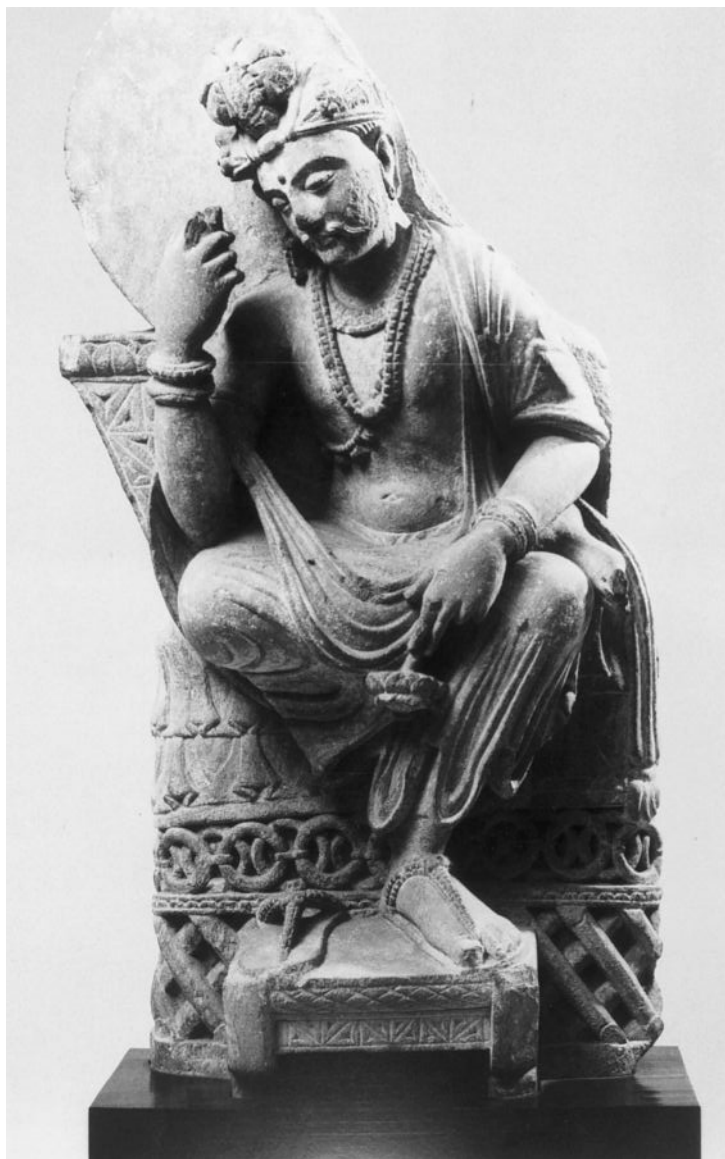


Fig. 4.44 Contemplative Bodhisattva holding a lotus flower, schist, Gandhāra, Matsuoka Museum of Art, Tokyo



Fig. 4.45a Cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva, from Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, wood, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 4.45b Lower torso of a standing figure, from small Temple "I", Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk, hardened clay, Musée Guimet, Paris



Fig. 4.46 Standing Buddha in plain robe, from Govindnagar, Mathura, light sandstone, Gupta period, ca. late 4<sup>th</sup>- early 5<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.47 Seated Buddha, Mathurā school, Gupta period, ca. 4<sup>th</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> century, sandstone, Cleveland Museum of Art

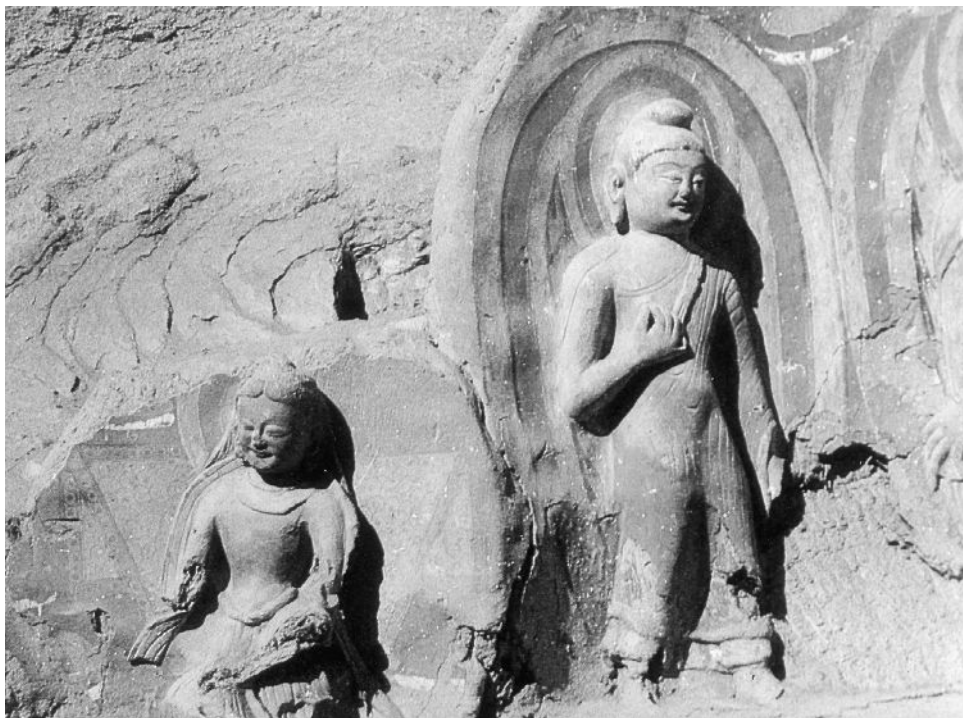


Fig. 4.48 Group 16 showing Contemplative Bodhisattva and left standing Buddha, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 4.49 Two standing Buddhas, Group 16, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 4.50 "Dancing Deva", Eastern Group, Tumshuk-Tagh, Tumshuk, painted clay, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



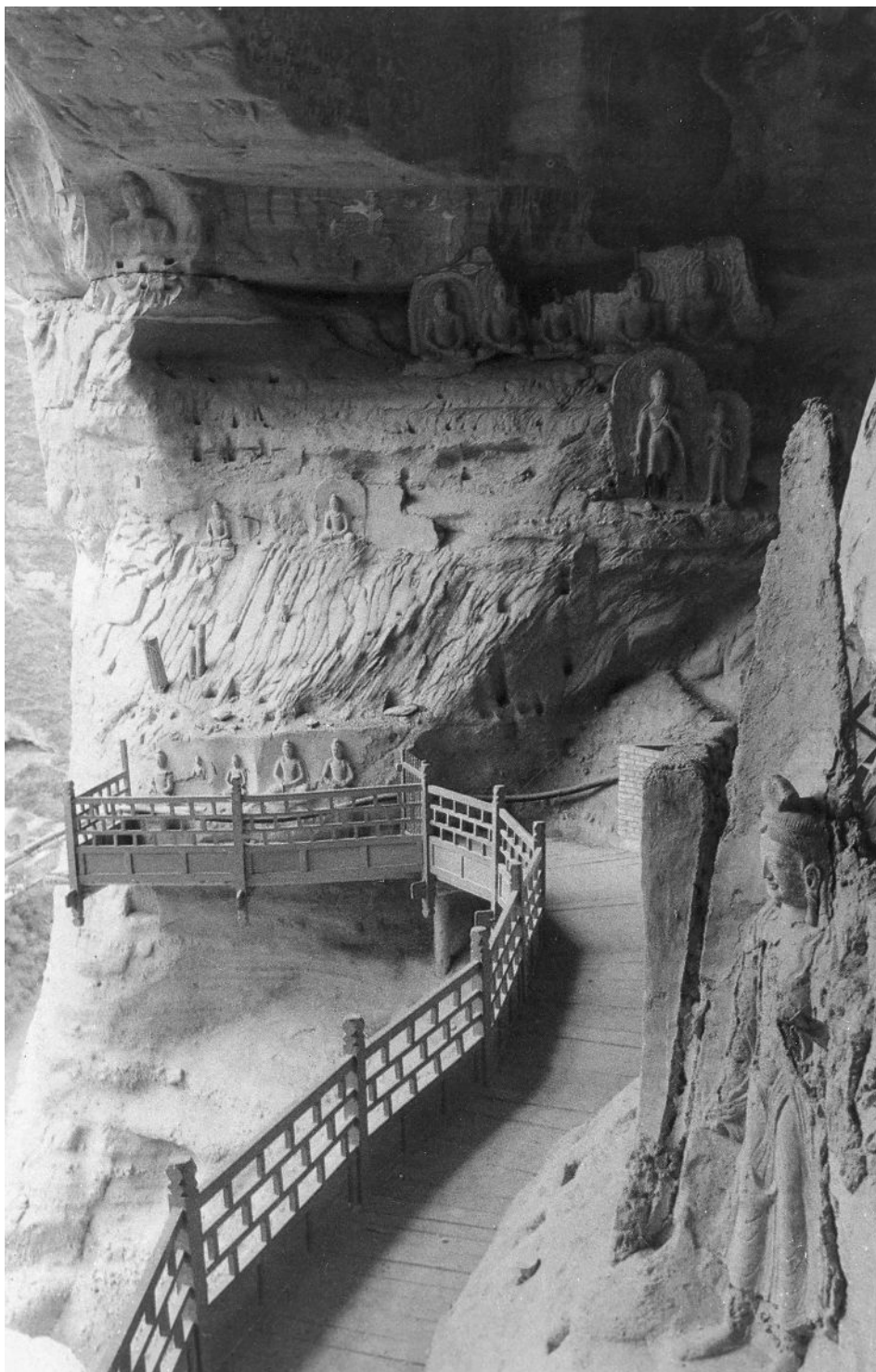


Fig. 5.1 View of the East and South Walls, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

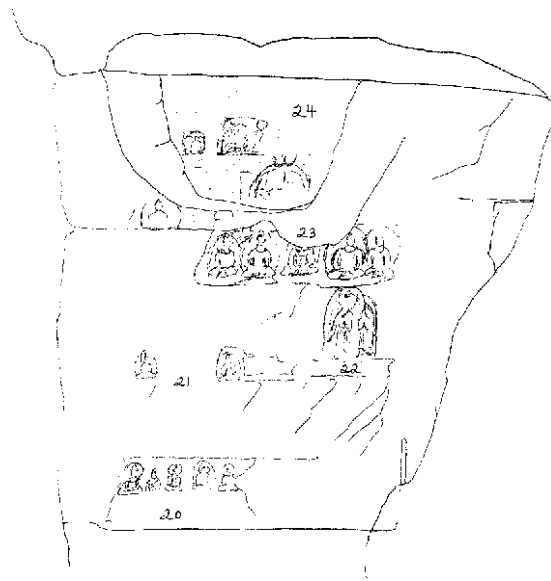


Fig. 5.2 Diagram of East and South Walls with image groups

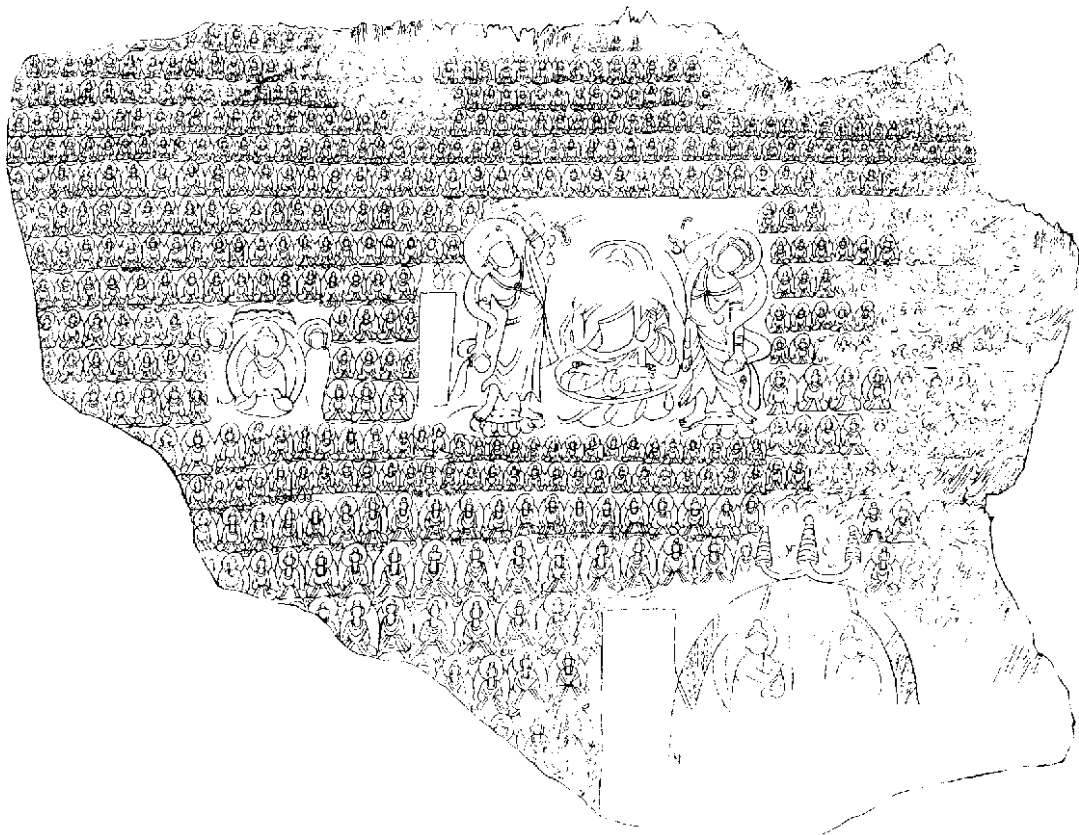


Fig. 5.3 Drawing of the thousand Buddha wall painting with three inset image groups, Group 24, East Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



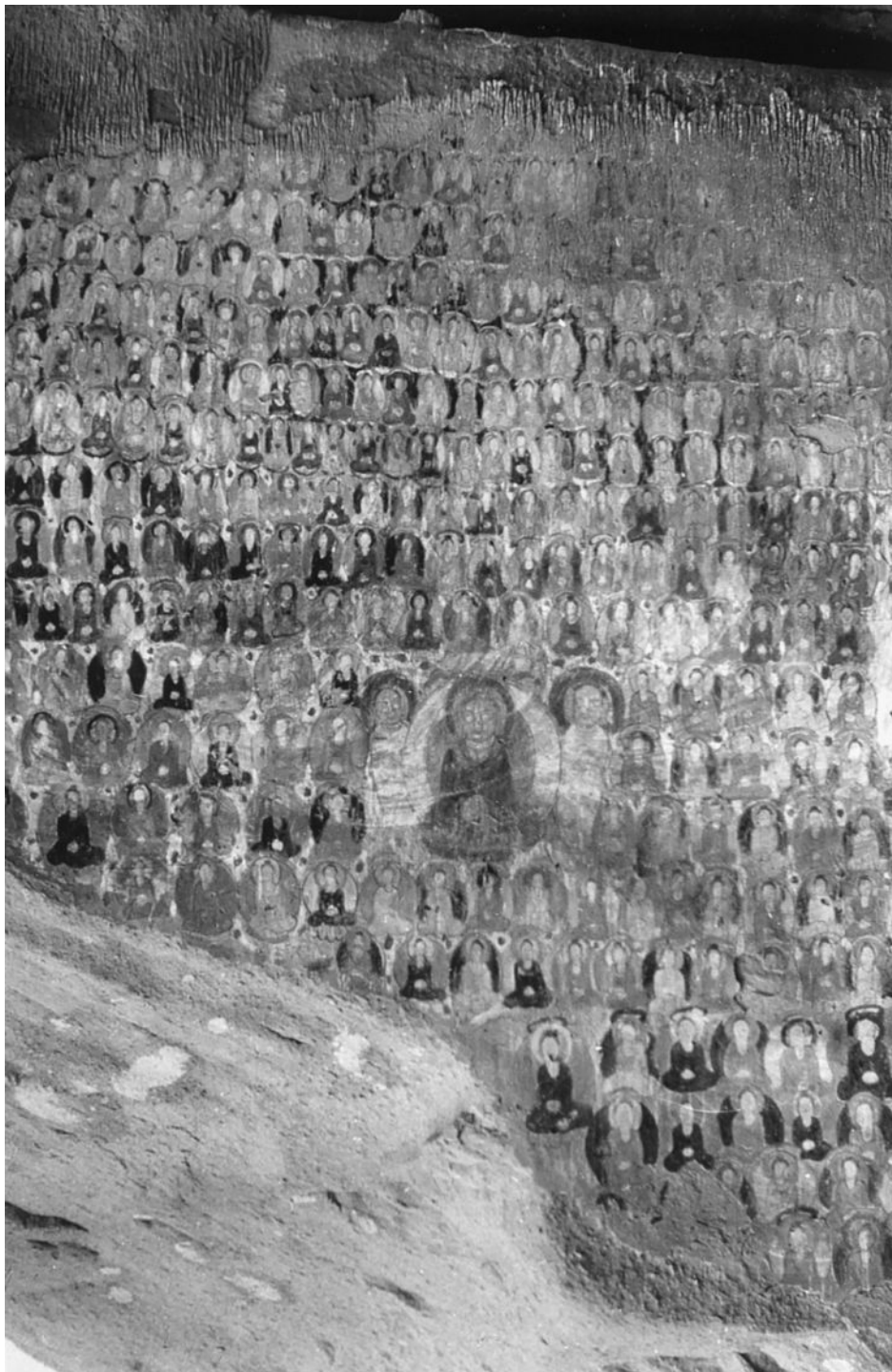


Fig. 5.4a Detail of the left (north) side of the thousand Buddha wall painting, with triad configuration, Group 24, East Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.4b Detail of the right (south) side of the thousand Buddha wall painting, showing triad with teaching Buddha and Śakyamuni and Prabhūtaratna with inscriptions, Group 24, East wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.5 Detail of triad with dhyānāsana Buddha, thousand Buddha wall painting, Group 24, East Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.6 Niche with Buddha and two monks, Fayaz-tepe, near Termez, southern Uzbekistan, marl limestone, National Museum of Uzbekistan History, Tashkent



Fig. 5.7 Head of a Buddha with head halo of circular bands, fragment of wall painting from small Temple "I", Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk



Fig. 5.8a Detail of triad with teaching Buddha, thousand Buddha wall painting, Group 24, East Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.8b Drawing of triad in Fig. 5.8a



Fig. 5.9 Seated Buddha in relief panel, from Site 5, Nāgārjunakōṇḍa, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.



Fig. 5.10 Triad with teaching Buddha, wall painting, north wall, Cave 251, Tun-huang, Northern Wei, ca. 480's





Fig. 5.12 Seated Buddha, detail from the middle layer of corbelled ceiling, north side of antechamber, Chang-ch'ôn Tomb No. 1, Chip-an, North Korea, Koguryô, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



Fig. 5.11 Vipasyin Buddha, from the seven Buddhas plus Maitreya around the dome of the miniature stone stupa (shih-t'a) of Chi-te, from Tun-huang, 426 A.D., Northern Liang dynasty, Tun-huang City Museum



Fig. 5.13a Dhyanāsana Buddha with mandorla and pedestal, from Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, wood with trances of pigments, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



Fig. 5.13b Dhyanāsana Buddha with mandorla and pedestal, from the “vestibule” of Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, wood, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 5.14a Detail of the Śākyamuni and Prabūtaratna niche with inscriptions, thousand Buddha wall painting, Group 24, East Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 400-410 A.D.

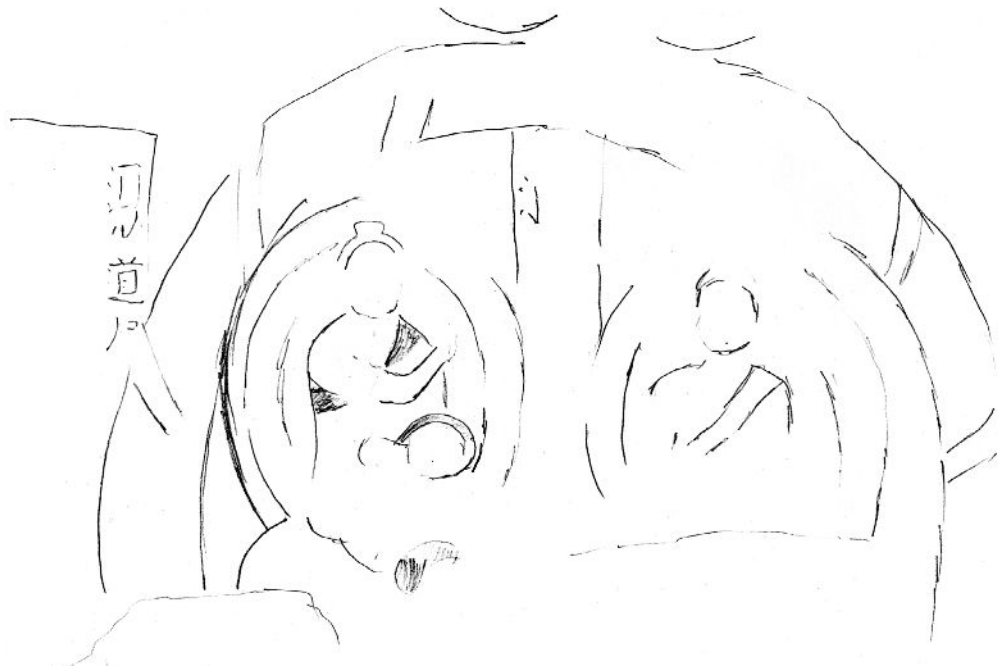


Fig. 5.14b Drawing of the Śākyamuni and Prabūtaratna niche from the wall painting of Group 24 in Fig. 5.14a



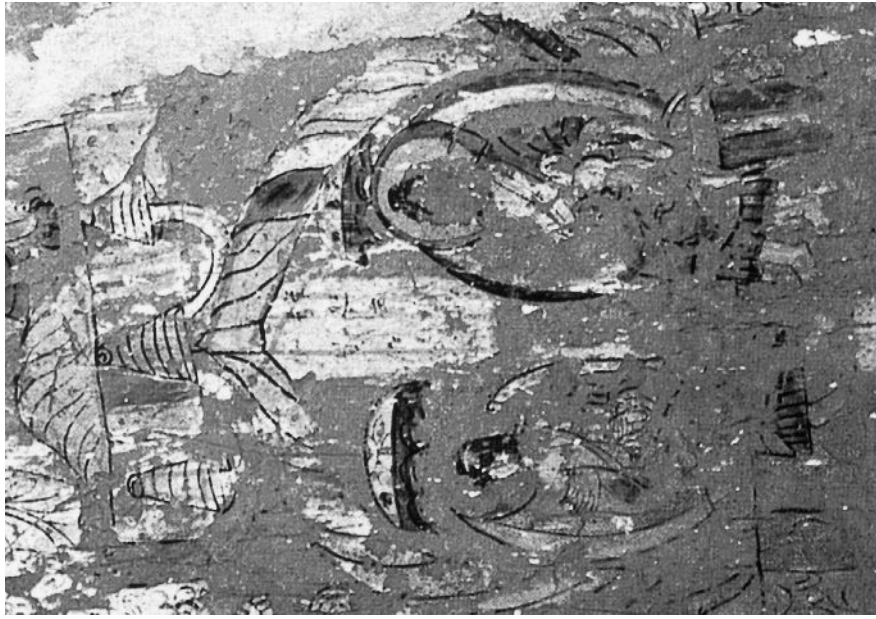


Fig. 5.15a Detail of the Śākyamuni and Prabhutaratna niche, wall painting in Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 5.15b Drawing of the Śākyamuni and Prabhutaratna niche from the wall painting of Group 12 in Fig. 5.15a



Fig. 5.16 Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā with two seated attendant Bodhisattvas, stone relief stele, Gandhāra, Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 5.17a Two stone Buddhapadas from Sikri, Gandhāra; left: Lahore Museum; right: Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh



↑  
Fig. 5.17b Detail of row of seven stupas each containing a dhyānāsana Buddha, south wall of south corridor, wall painting, Cave 38, Kizil, Kucha, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



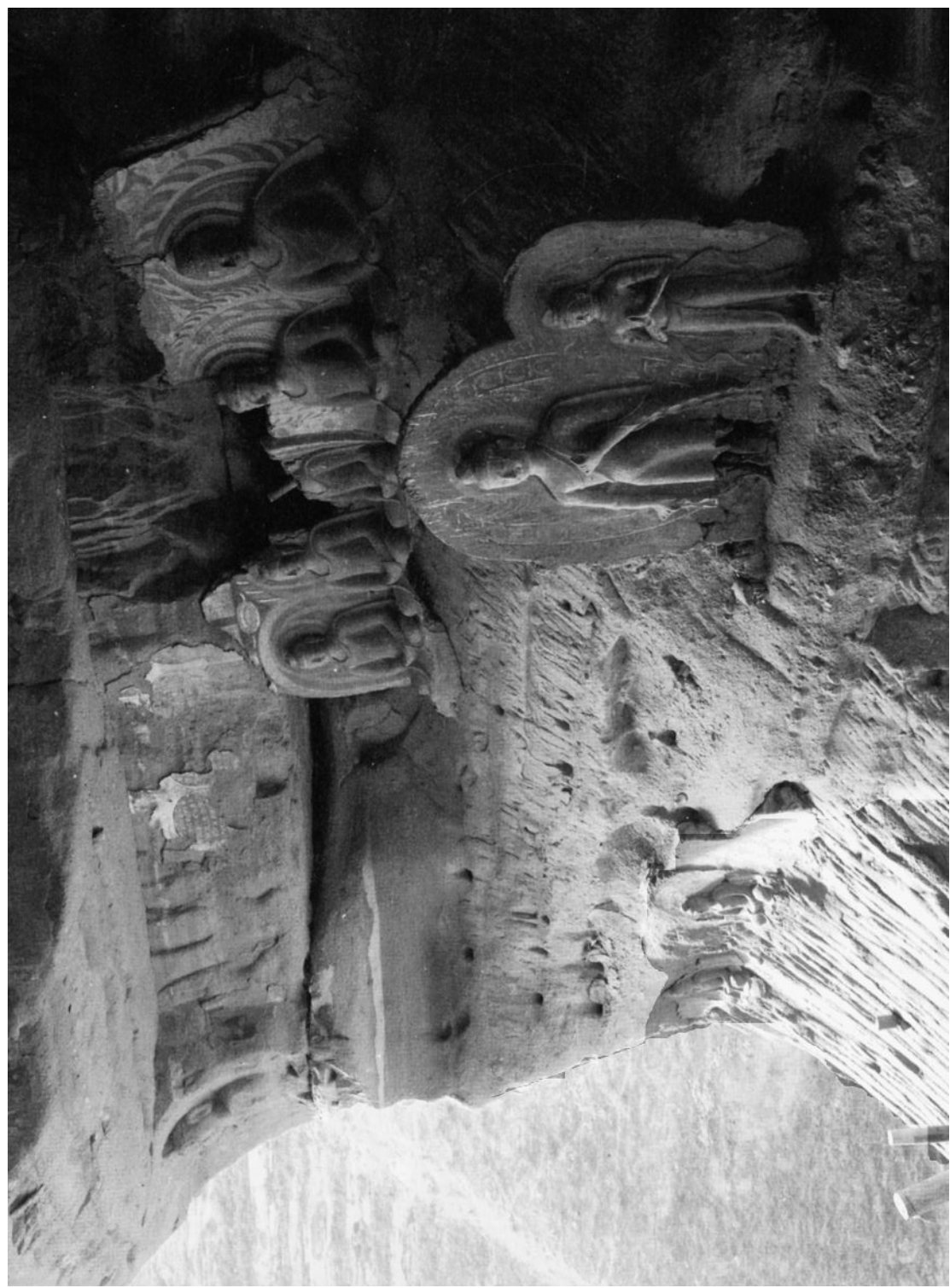


Fig. 5.18 View of the upper part of the South Wall showing Groups 23 and 22, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

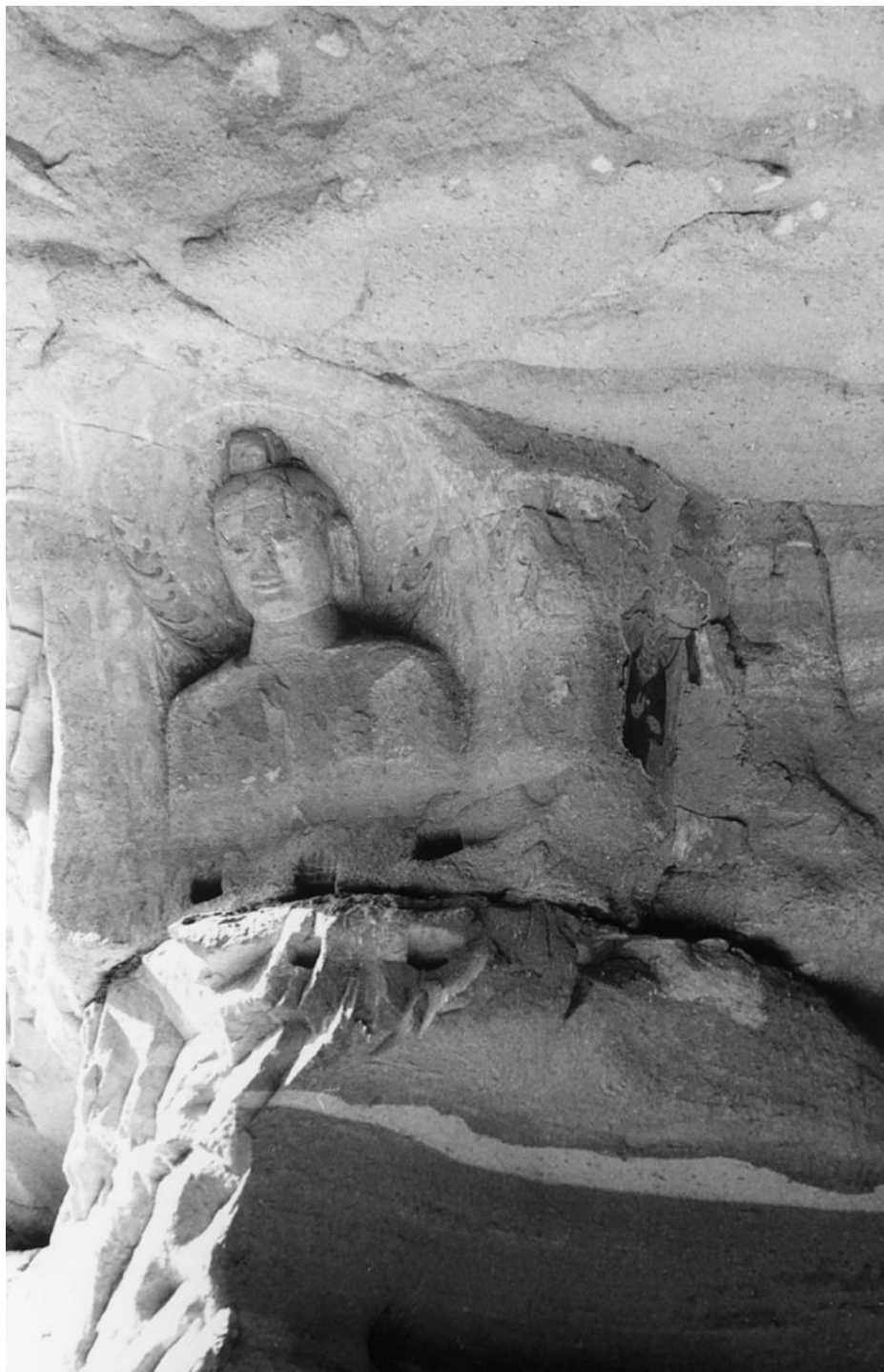


Fig. 5.19 Front (east) part of the South Wall showing large dhyānāsana Buddha and remains of wall paintings, Group 23, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.20 Detail of large dhyanāsana Buddha and mandorla, stone core relief, South Wall, Group 23, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.21 Drawing of the flame patterns in the mandorla of the large seated stone core Buddha of Group 23 in Fig. 5.19a



Fig. 5.22 Detail of the remains of two stupas from the east end of row of stupas, wall paintings, upper part of the South Wall, Group 23, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



i)



small  
monk

ii)

Figs. 5.23 Drawing of the stupa remains  
in the wall paintings of Group 23, South  
Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

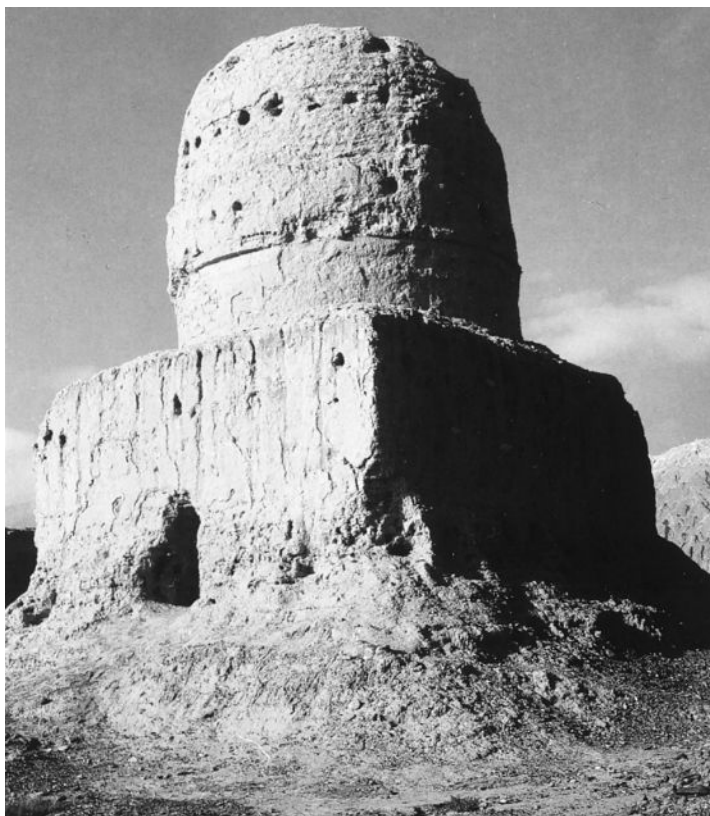
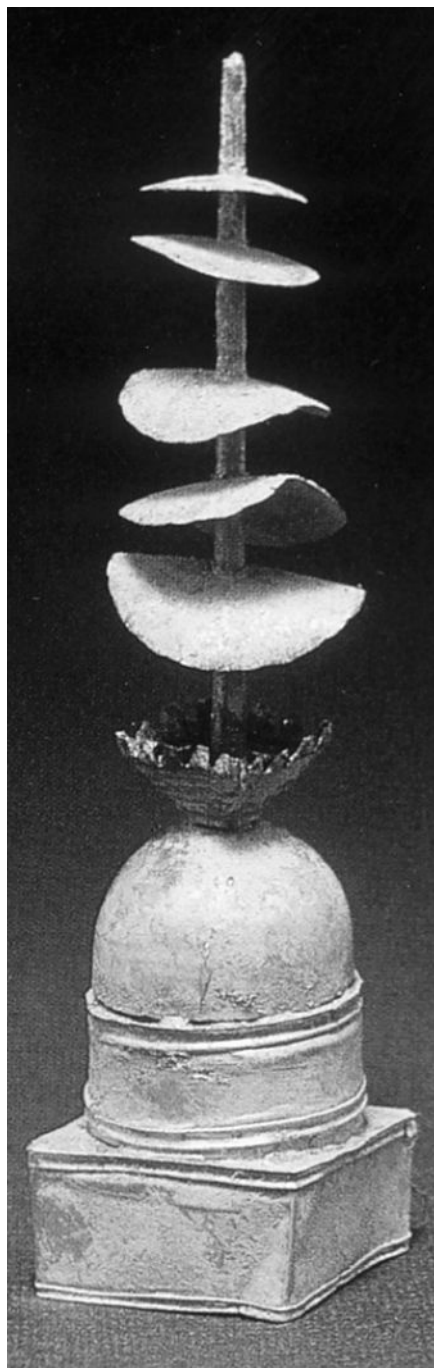


Fig. 5.24b Southwest Stupa, Eastern Site, Subashi, Kucha

←

Fig. 5.24a Gold miniature stupa, probably from Mingora, private collection, Japan





Fig. 5.25a Large miniature stone stupa (prior to restoration) from Lōriyān Tāngai, Gandhāra, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.

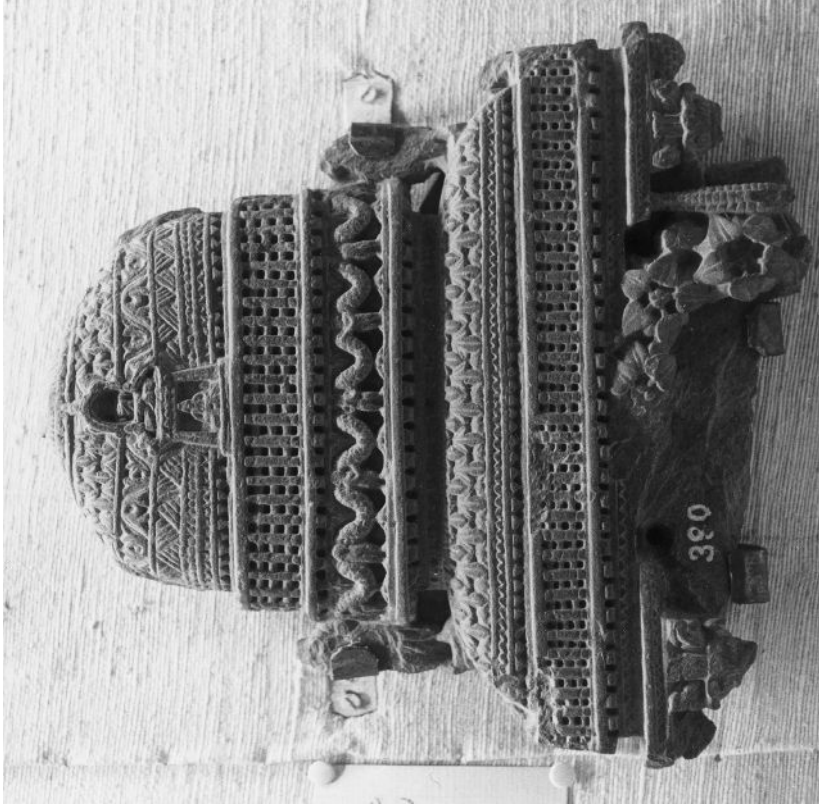


Fig. 5.25b Model of a shrine, stone relief, Gandhāra, now Lahore Museum



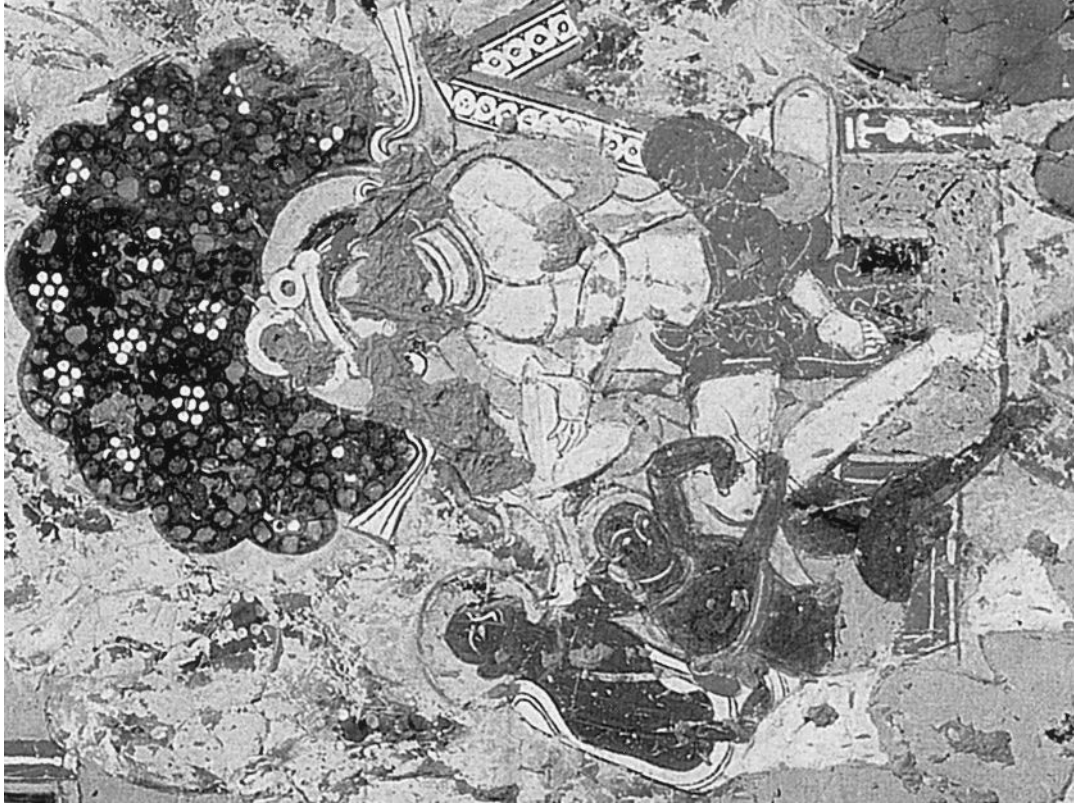


Fig. 5.25c Detail of Jataka scene, wall painting, ceiling of Cave 38, Kizil, Kucha, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century

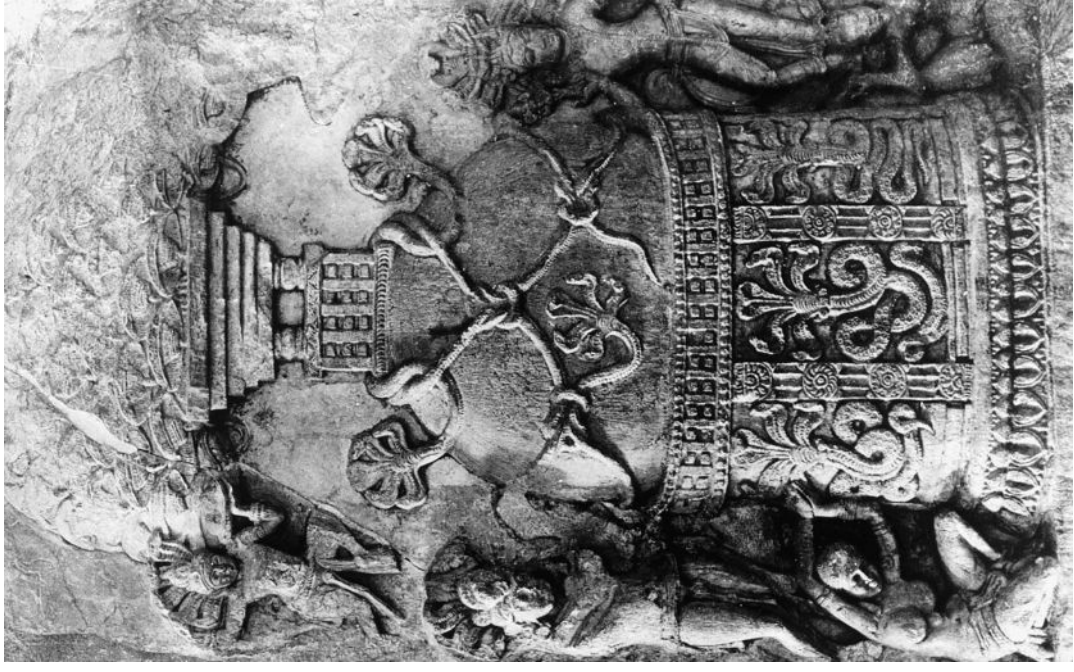


Fig. 5.26 Adoration of a stupa by nāgas, limestone relief, from Amarāvati Stupa, Andhra Pradesh, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.



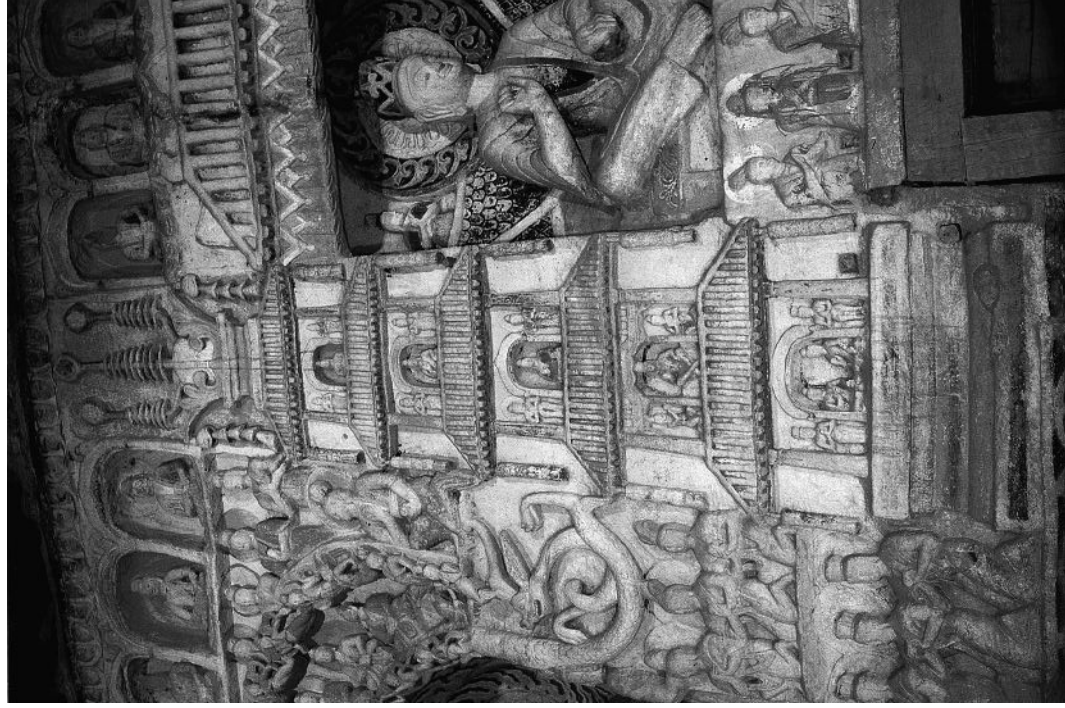


Fig. 5.27a Five-storied pagoda, relief, Cave 6, Yün-kang stone caves, Ta-t'ung, Shansi, ca. 480's A.D.



Fig. 5.27b Relief panel, niche 5, window, east reveal, dated 495 A.D., Cave 11, Yün-kang stone caves, Ta-t'ung, Shansi.





Fig. 5.28 Detail of wall painting showing aquatic creatures, lotus buds and flaming jewels, underside of lintel of celestial musicians, main chamber, Cave 38, Kizil, Kucha, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



Fig. 5.29 Relief with stupas, stone, Gandhāra, now Peshāwar Museum



Fig. 5.30a View of the five Buddhas (prior to repair of head of central Buddha), Group 23, and the triad of Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Pingling ssu





Fig. 5.30b View of the five Buddhas (after repair of head of central Buddha), Group 23, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



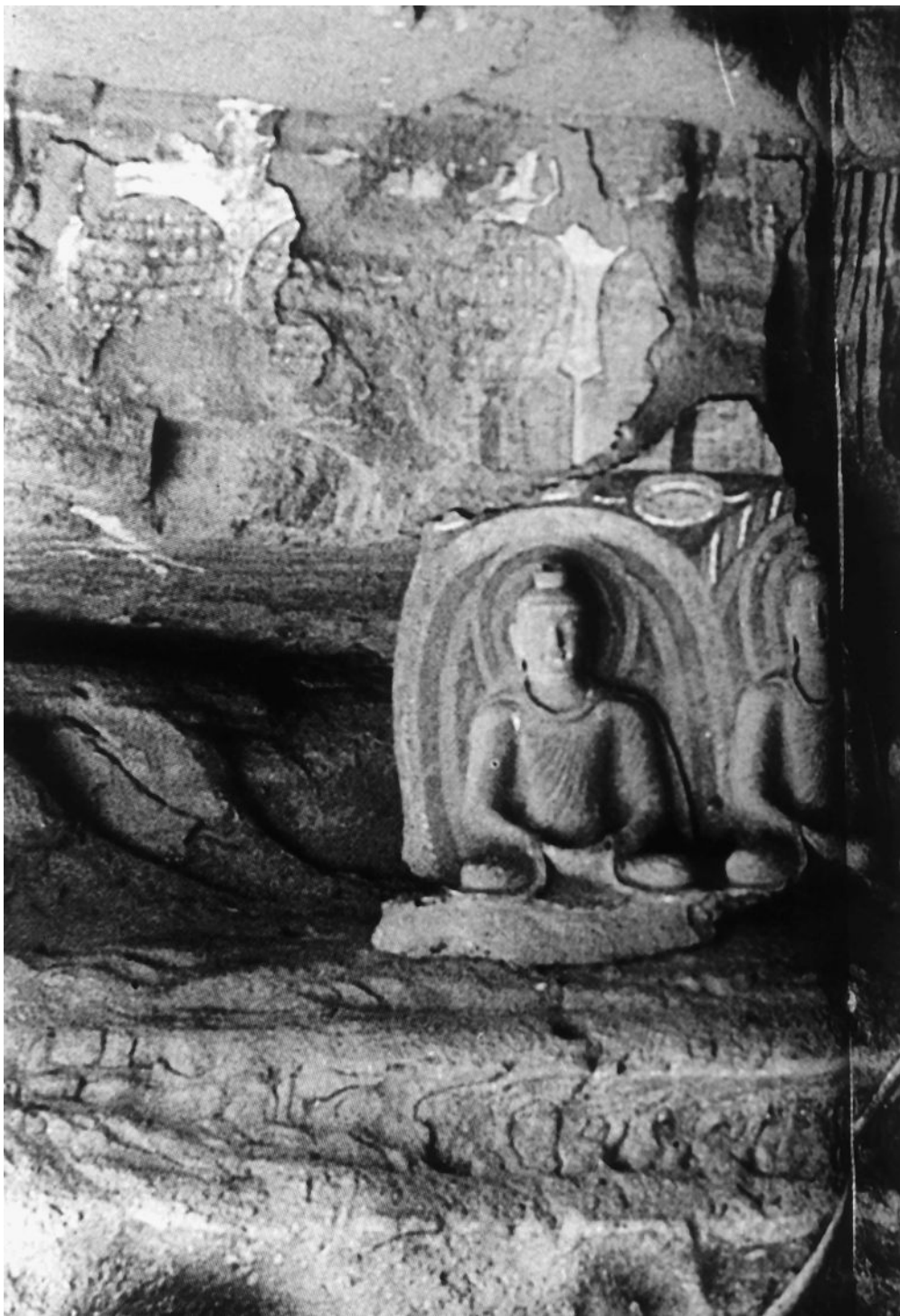


Fig. 5.30c Partial view of Group 23 wall paintings of stupas, "Ping-shen" inscription, and two of the five Buddhas, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

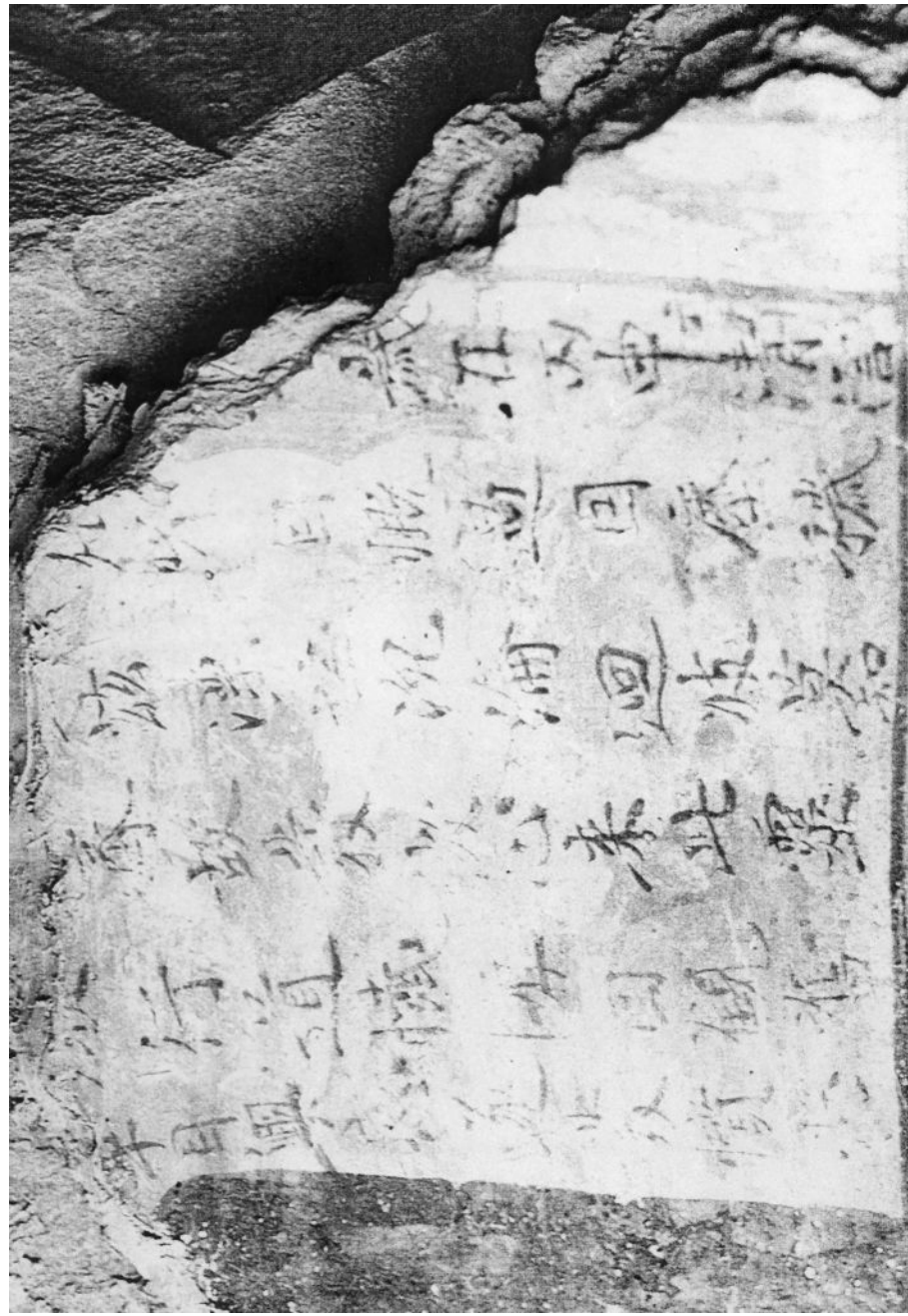


Fig. 5.31 The “Ping-shen” inscription, Group 23, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

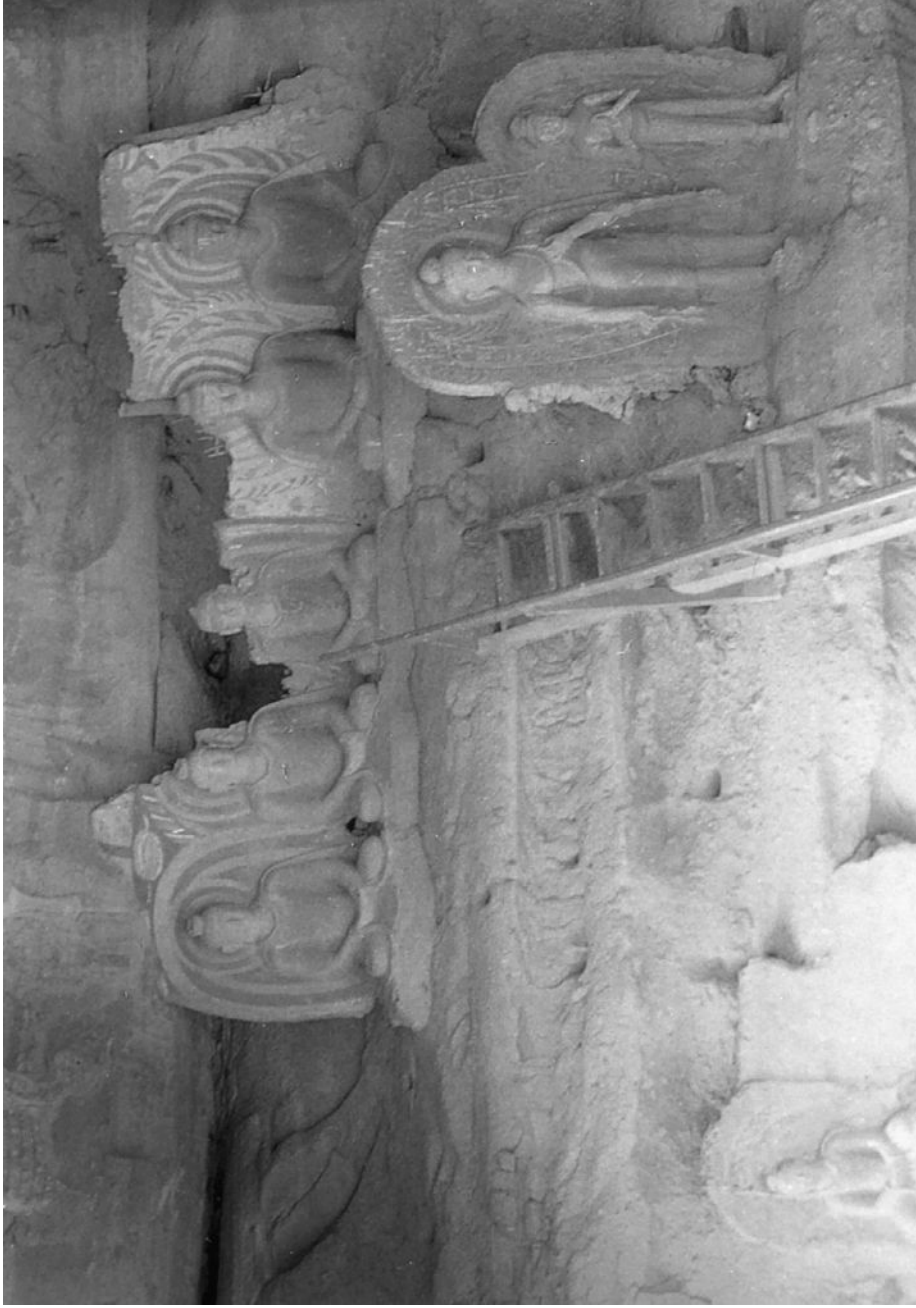


Fig. 5.32 View of the five Buddhas of Group 23 with Group 22 below (right), South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.33 Detail of the two left (east) dhyānasana Buddhas of the row of five Buddhas, Group 23, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.34a Drawing of a dhyānāsana Buddha from Temple B, Karadong, Keriya (near Khotan), Southern Silk Route, Central Asia, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century



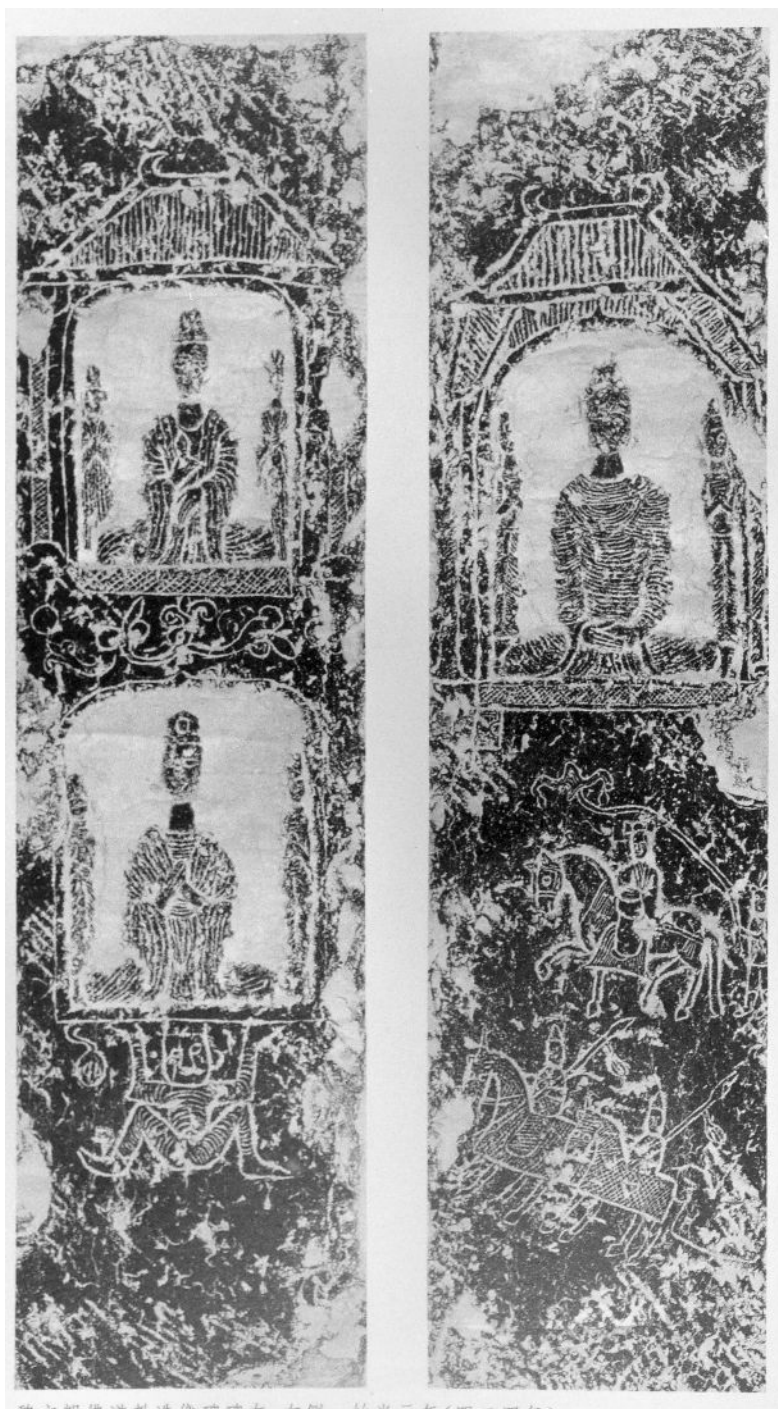


Fig. 5.34b Rubbing of the sides of the Wei Wen-lang stele dated 424 A.D., from Yao hsien, Shensi, stone, Yao hsien Yao-wang shan po-wu-kuan

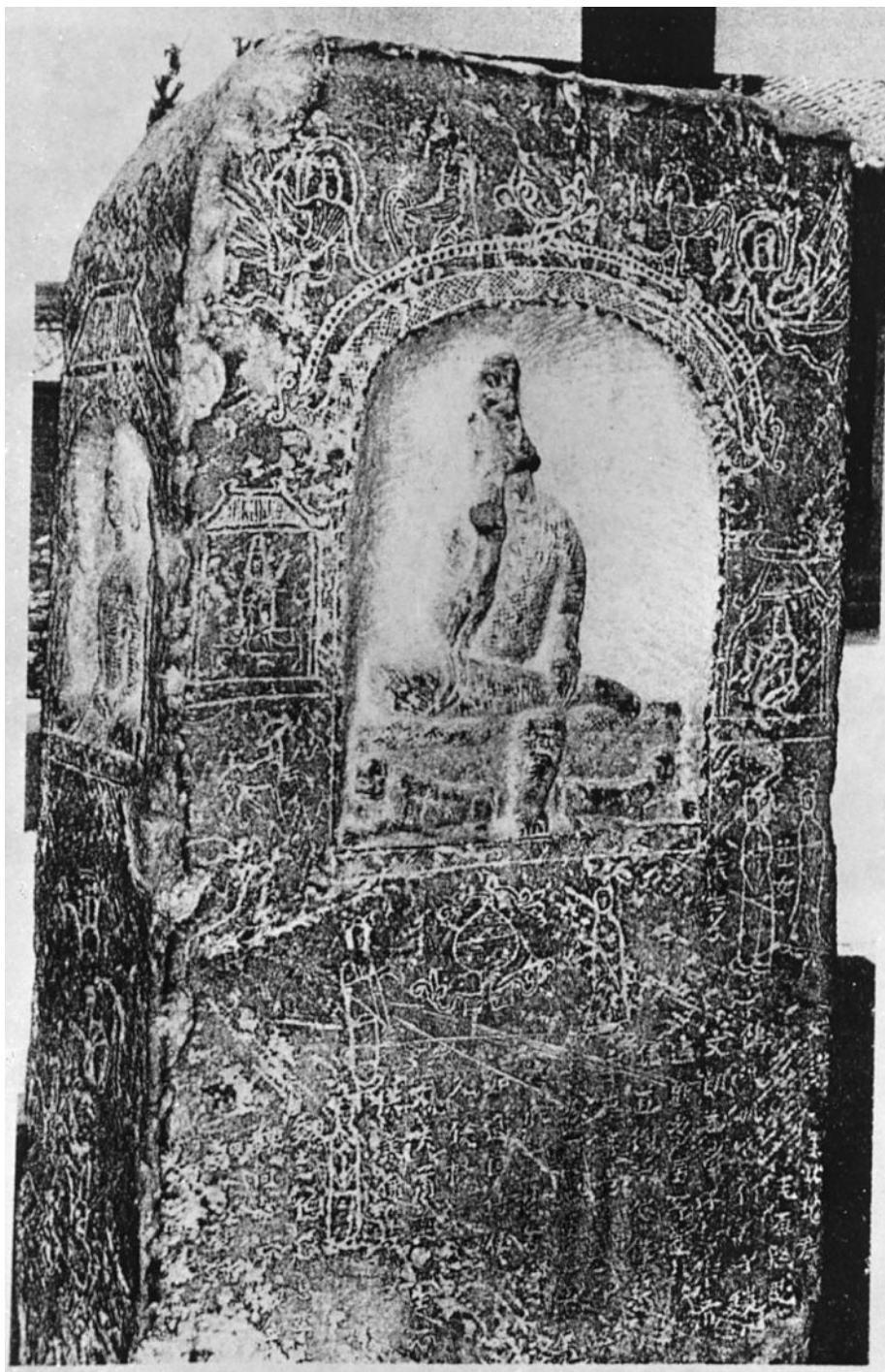


Fig. 5.34c Back face of the Wei Wen-lang stele with Contemplative Bodhisattva niche, dated 424 A.D., Yao-hsien, Shensi, Yao-wang shan po-wu-kuan





Fig. 5.35 Seated Buddha, Mathurā school, early Gupta, ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, sandstone, Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 5.36 Head of the far left (east) Buddha in the row of five Buddhas, Group 23, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.37a Buddha head from small Temple "J", Toqquz-Sarai, Tumshuk, hardened clay, Musée Guimet, Paris



Fig. 5.37b Seated dhyanāsana Buddha, gilt bronze, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.





Fig. 5.37c Cross-ankled Buddha, probably from Rawak, Khotan, reddish clay, Trinkler expedition, now Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. 5.37d Adoration after the Enlightenment, stone relief from the Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila, Gandhara

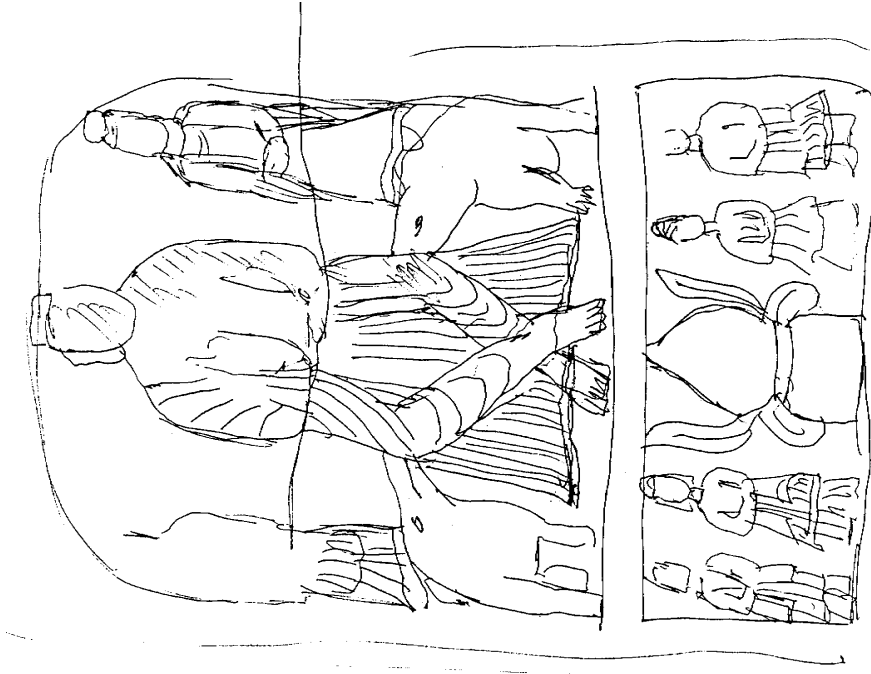


Fig. 5.38a Sketch of the lower and central part of the front side of a red sandstone relief, dated Northern Wei (411 A.D.), Sian Municipal Cultural Relics Association



Fig. 5.38b Dhyānāsana Buddha, stone stele, dated Northern Wei T'ai-an first year (455 A.D.), Fujii Yūrinkan, Kyoto





Fig. 5.39 Two dhyānāsana Buddhas at the right side (west) of the row of five Buddhas, Group 23, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.40 Standing Buddha, Sarnath, Gupta period, 4<sup>th</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> century, sandstone, Archaeological Museum, Sarnath



Fig. 5.41 Head of Buddha at far right (west side) of row of five seated Buddhas, Group 23, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.42 Seated dhyānasana Buddha, ca. 415 A.D., dark bronze, Rietberg Museum, Zürich

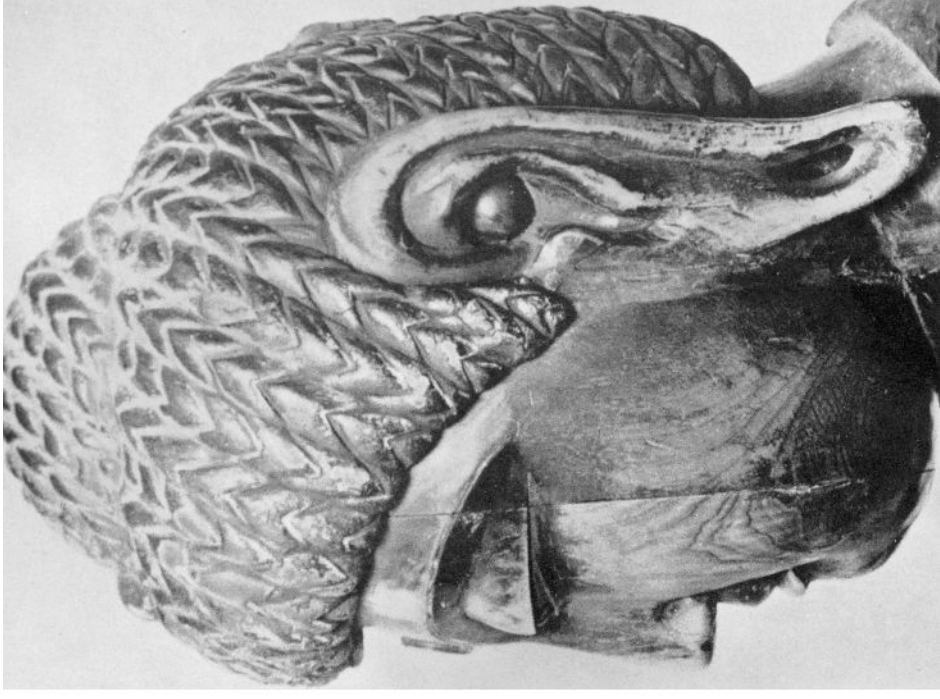
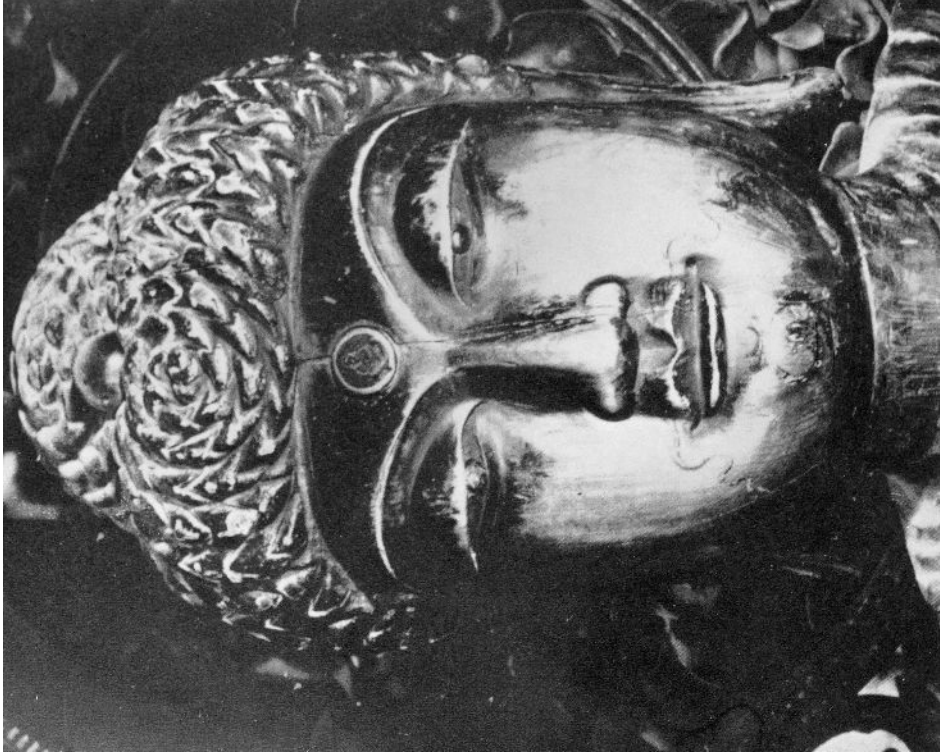


Fig. 5.43 Head of the standing Sakyamuni Buddha ("Udayana Buddha"), copy made in 985 A.D. in China by the Japanese monk Chōnen, now at the Seiryōji, Kyoto, candana wood



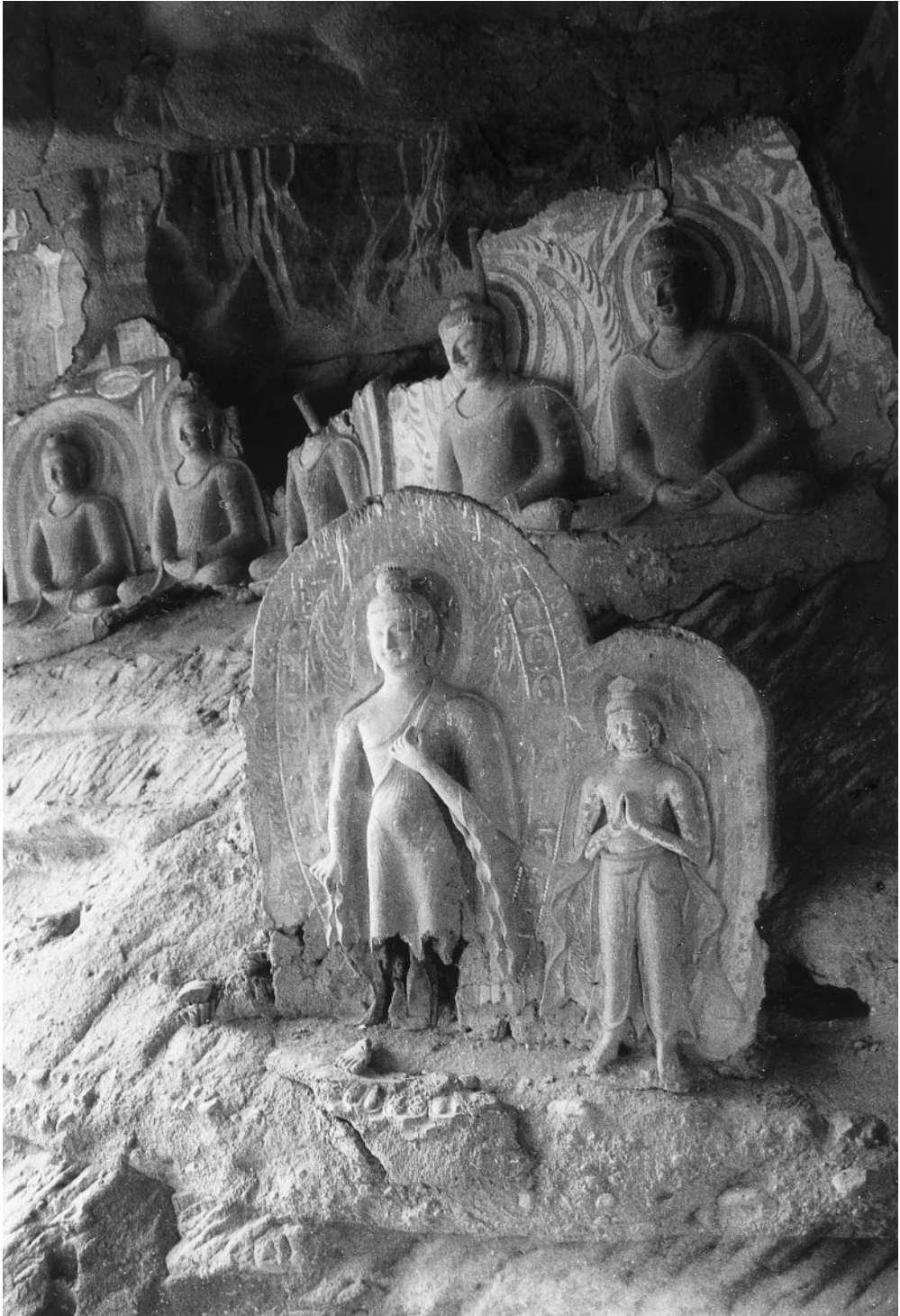


Fig. 5.44 View of Group 22 (foreground) and Group 23 (background), South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.45 Standing Buddha and left attendant Bodhisattva, Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



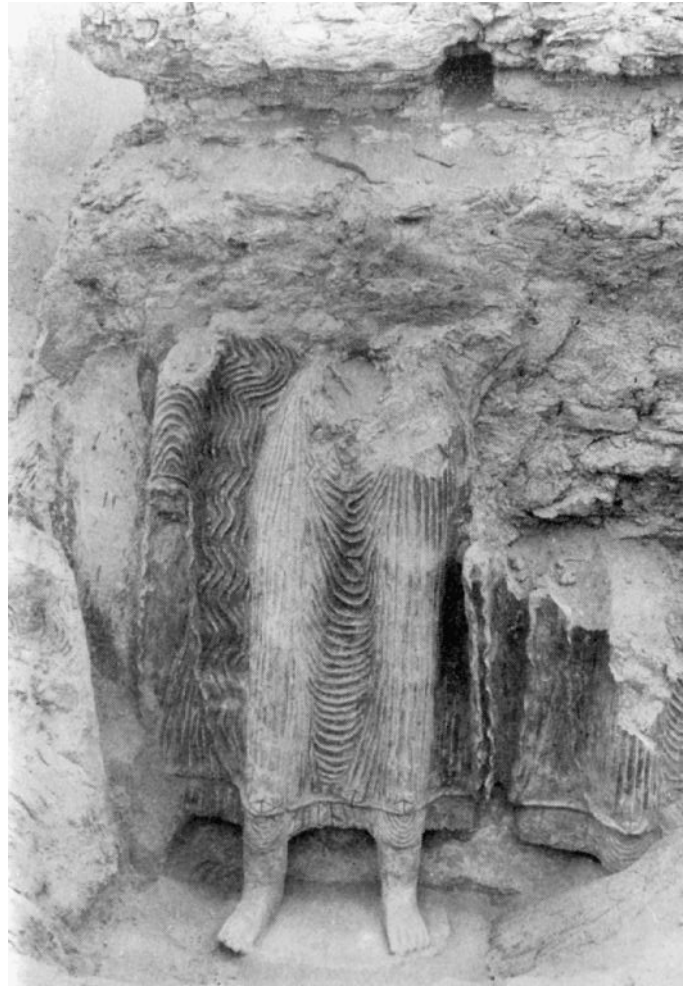


Fig. 5.47 Standing Buddhas (D1-D3), outside the southwest enclosure wall (north side), Rawak stupa (near Khotan), painted clay

←

Fig. 5.46 Standing Buddha, from Cave 77 (Cave of the Statues), Kizil, Kucha, painted clay, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 5.48 Head of the standing Buddha, Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, painted clay



Fig. 5.49 Side view of head of standing Buddha, Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

Fig. 5.50 Wall painting of swimmers, Cave 212 (Cave of the Seafarers), Kizil, Kucha, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin →



Fig. 5.51 Lower body and lotus pedestal of the standing Buddha, Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu ↓

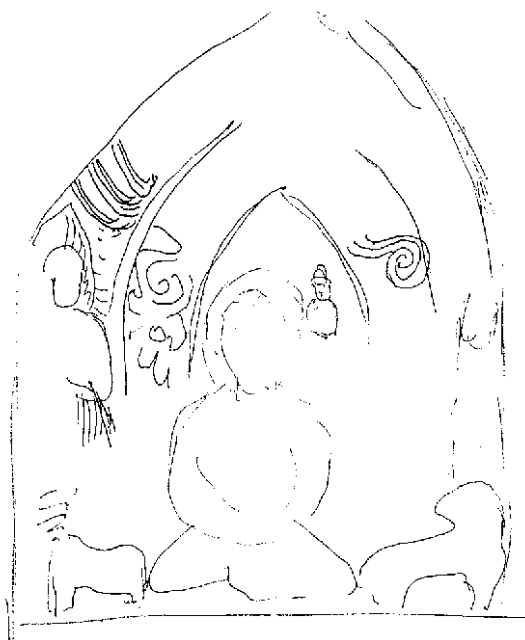


Fig. 5.52 Sketch of a red sandstone relief stele, dated Northern Wei (411 A.D.), Sian Municipal Cultural Relics Association



Fig. 5.53 Standing left attendant Bodhisattva, Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.54 Torso, Cave 77 (Cave of the Statues), Kizil, Kucha, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin

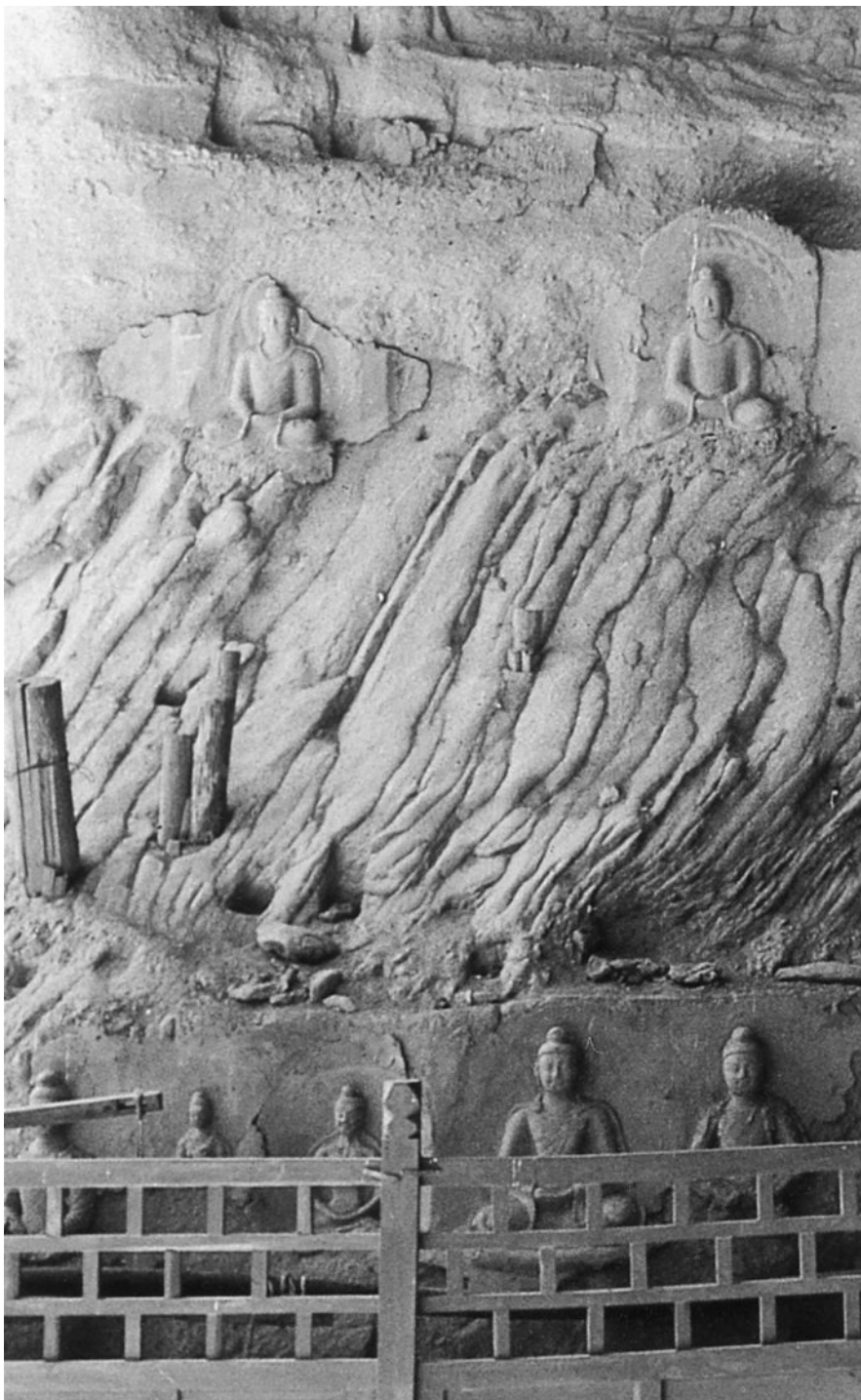


Fig. 5.55 Groups 21 (top) and 20 (below), South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.56a Dhyanāsana Buddha at the right (west) end of Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.56b Dhyanāsana Buddha at the left (east) end of the Group 22, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)

(E)



Fig. 5.57 Five Buddha sculptures of Group 20, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.58 Dhyānasana Buddha (A) at right (east) end of the row of five Buddhas, Group 20, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.59a Dhyānasana Buddha sculpture in vaulted niche, left side of entrance passage, GK Cave 20, Kuntura, Kucha, clay and stucco with pigments



Fig. 5.59b Buddha head, clay, from Khotan, ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> century



↑  
Fig. 5.60 Dhyanāsana Buddha (B) in row of five Buddhas, Group 20, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu (after *Heirinji sekkutsu*, fig. 56)





Fig. 5.61 Buddhas (C), (D) and (E) in row of five Buddhas, Group 20, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 5.62 Ascetic Buddha (C) in row of five Buddhas, Group 20, South Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.63a Ascetic Śākyamuni, wall painting, narrative of the Temptation of Māra, left wall, main room, Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin

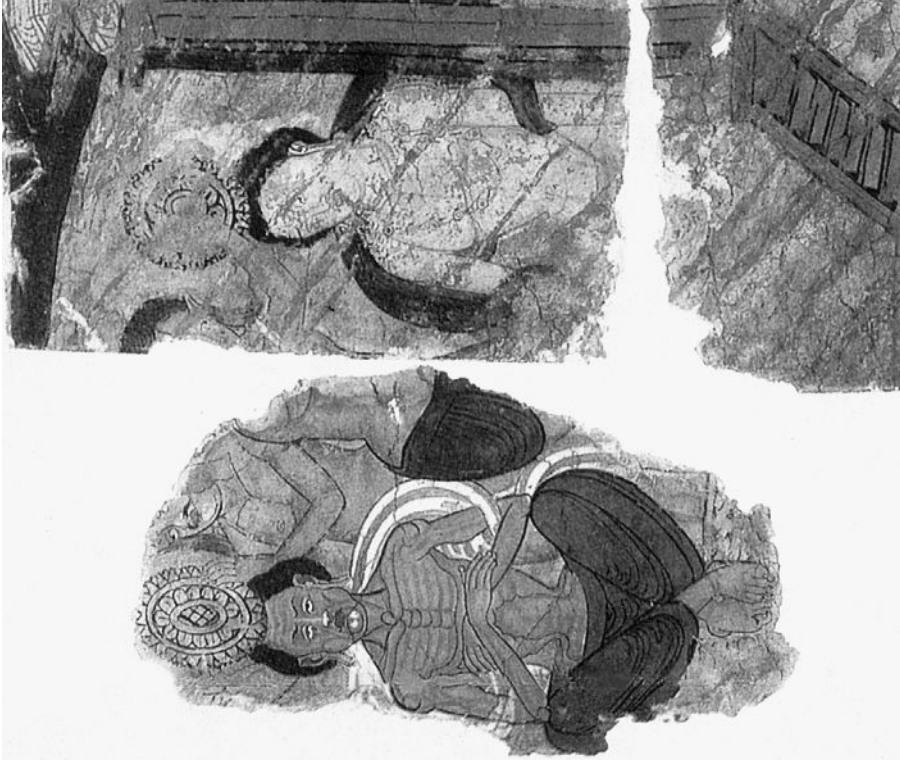


Fig. 5.63b Detail from narrative painting of the Śrōṇakoṭīkārṇa Avadāna, wall painting, Cave 212 (Cave of the Seafarers), Kizil, Kucha, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin





Fig. 5.64 Monk, wall painting, Parinirvāṇa scene, rear passage, right wall, Cave 48, Kizil, Kucha



Fig. 5.65 Fragment of the small black stone miniature stupa (shih-t'a), from Chiu-ch'üan, Kansu province, ca. 430 A.D.



Fig. 5.66a Dhyānāsana Buddha (E) in row of five Buddhas, Group 20,  
Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 5.66b Head of dhyānāsana Buddha (E) in Fig. 5.66a





Fig. 5.67 Buddha head, from Yün-kang, Ta-t'ung, Shansi province, ca. 480's,

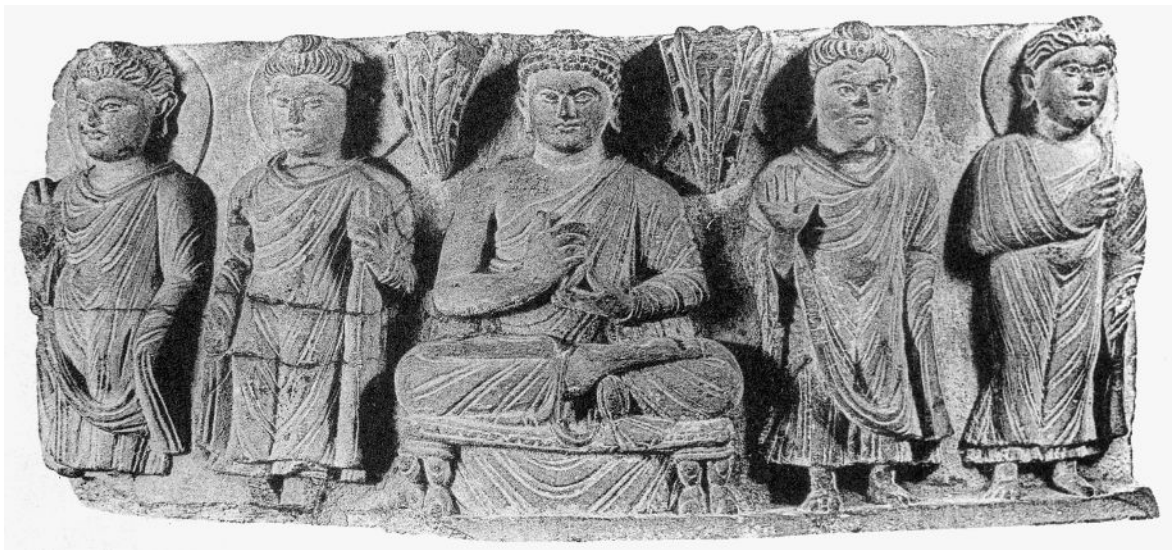


Fig. 5.68 Row of Buddhas, curved stone relief, Gandhāra, ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century

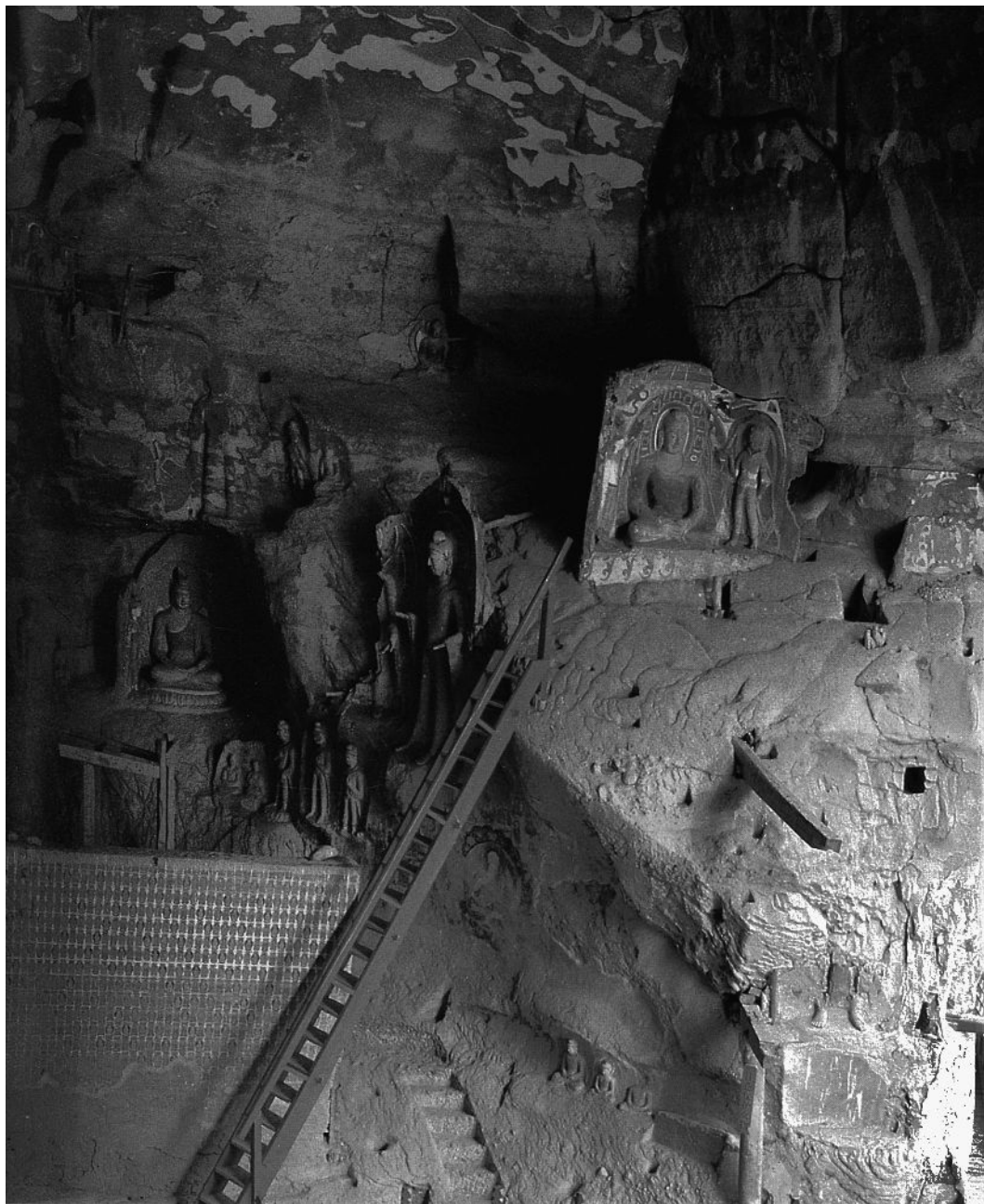


Fig. 6.1 View of the North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

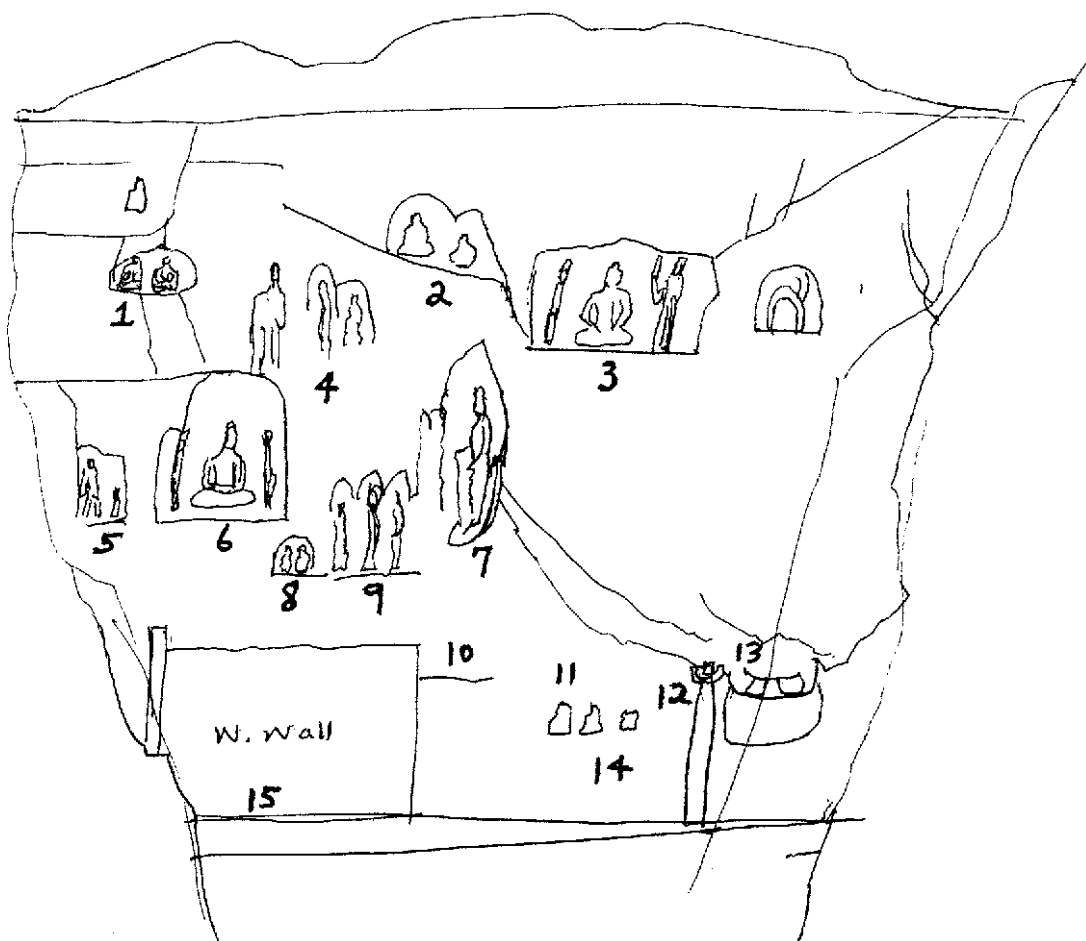


Fig. 6.2 Diagram of the North Wall showing the image groups, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 6.3 Two dhyanasana Buddhas, Group 1, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



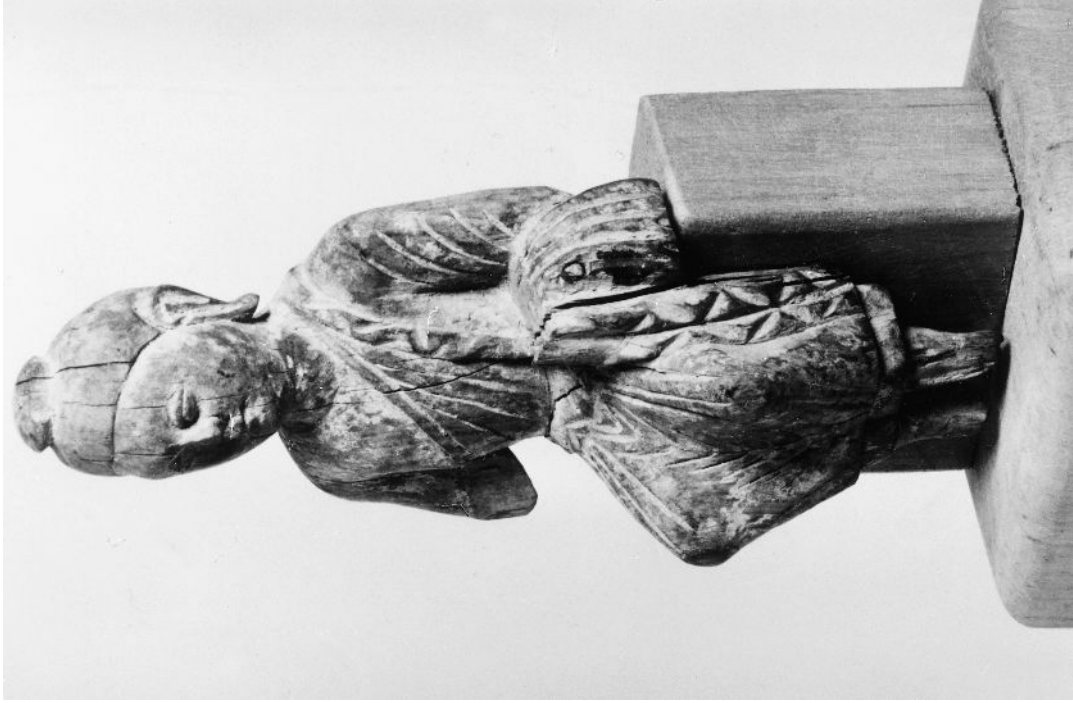


Fig. 6.4 Seated Buddha (Maitreya?), from Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, wood with traces of color and gold, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



Fig. 6.5 Dhyānasana Buddha, Group 2, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 6.6 View of the upper part of the North Wall showing Groups 2 (upper right) and 4 (front), Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 6.7 North Wall with Groups 4, 6, 7 and 9, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

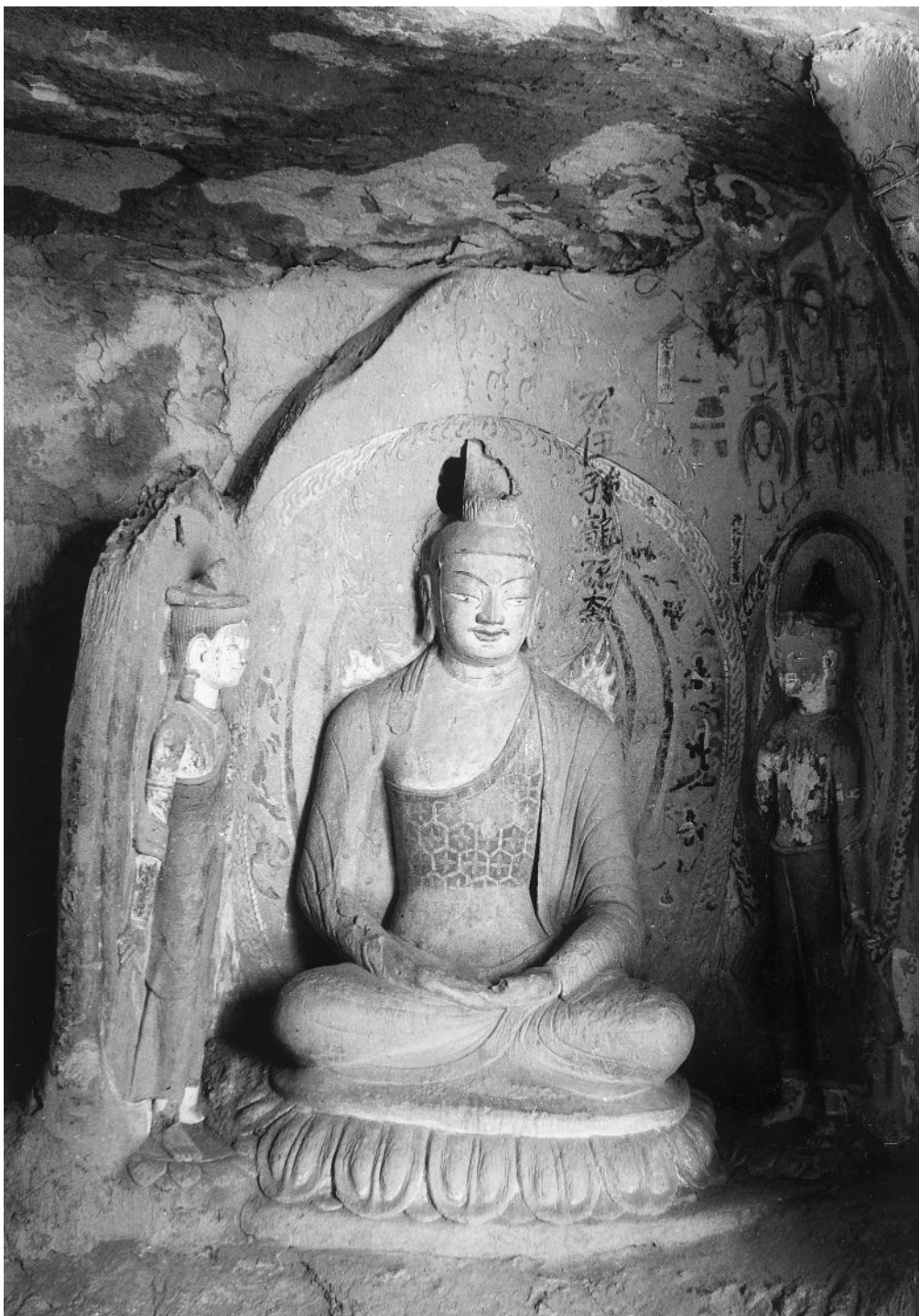


Fig. 6.8a Amitāyus niche, 424 A.D., Group 6, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 6.8b Amitayus Buddha, 424 A.D., Group 6, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 6.9a Dhyānāsana Buddha, from Khora, Kara-shahr, wood, British Museum, London

Fig. 6.9b Sculptures R1-R5, inside the southwest enclosure wall (north side), Rawak Stupa Court, Khotan ↓







Fig. 6.9c Silver gilt plate with Shapur II (309-379) hunting boars, Sassanian, ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



→  
Fig. 6.9d Dhyānāsana Buddha, Maitreya according to inscription, 426 A.D., gilt bronze, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. 6.10a Head of Amitayus Buddha, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.





Fig. 6.10b Head of Amitayus Buddha, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Figs. 6.11a, b Detail of mandorla of Amitayus Buddha, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 6.12a Detail of the flame patterns in the mandorla of Amitayus Buddha, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.

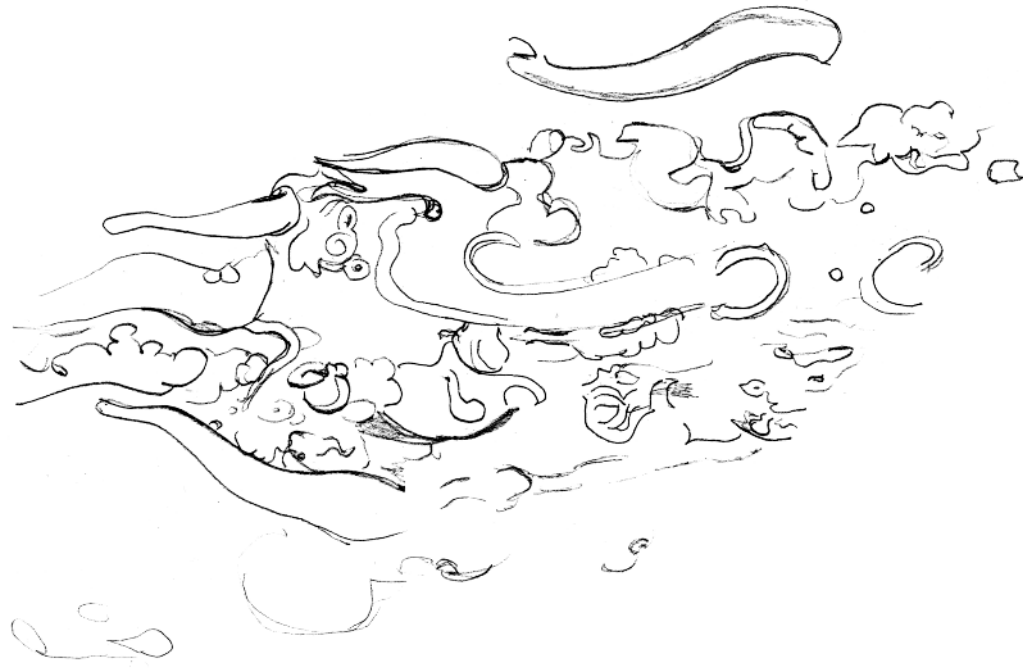


Fig. 6.12b Drawing of the flame pattern in the crest of the mandorla of Amitayus Buddha in Fig. 6.12a





Fig. 6.13a Detail of seated Buddha, gilt bronze, dated corresponding to 477 A.D., Northern Wei, private collection, Japan

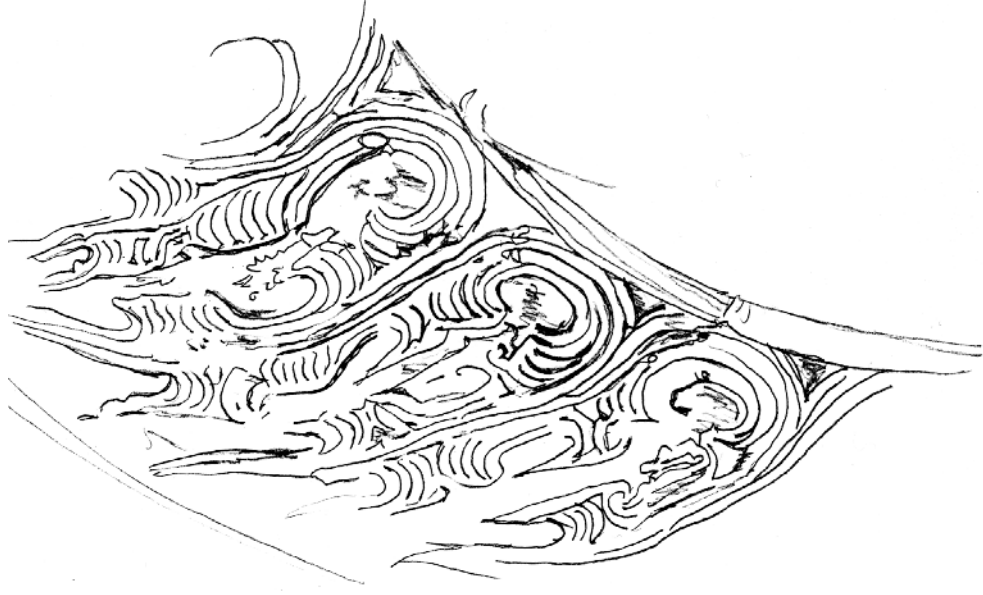


Fig. 6.13b Drawing of the flame patterns in the mandorla of the Buddha in Fig. 6.13a.





Fig. 6.14a Right attendant of Amitāyus Buddha with remains of inscription naming Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.

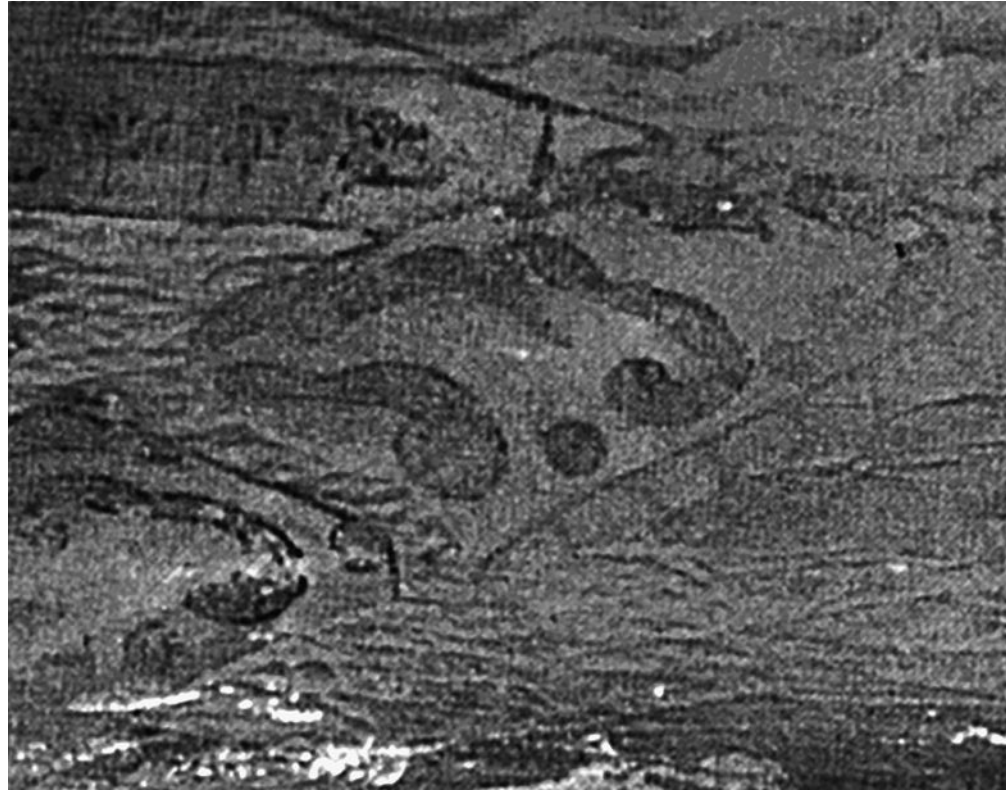


Fig. 6.14b Detail of colophon inscription of Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa (Avalokiteśvara), Group 6, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 6.14c Right Attendant (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva) of Amitāyus Buddha, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.





Fig. 6.14d Detail of the face of Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 6.14e Kartikkeya, Cave 3, Udayāgiri, M. P., India, ca. 400 A.D.



Fig 6.15a Amitayus niche, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.





Fig. 6.15b Left Attendant of Amitāyus, Te-ta-shih-chih p'u-sa (Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva), Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.

香其有聞者塵勞垢習自然不起風觸其身  
 皆得悅樂譬如法丘得滅盡三昧又風吹散  
 華遍滿佛土隨色次第而不雜亂柔澤光澤  
 馨香芬烈之屬其上踏下四寸隨攀足已還  
 復如故葉用已訖地輒開裂以沃化浸清淨  
 九遠隨其時節風吹散花如是六及又果實  
 蓮花周滿世界一一寶華百千億葉其葉光  
 明无量種色青色青也白色白光香寶珠紫  
 光色三然燁燁爛明曜日月一一華中出  
 三十六百千億光一一光中出三十六百千  
 億佛身色紫金相好殊特一一諸佛又說百  
 千光明普為十方說微妙法如是諸佛各各  
 安立无量衆生在佛正道  
 佛說无量壽經上

大魏神瑞二年四月辛卯王澄為  
 父母敬書經



Fig. 6.16 Final lines of the manuscript copy of the *Shou-fo Wu-liang-shou ching* (chüan shang), bearing the date of Shen-shui 2<sup>nd</sup> year (415 A.D.), said to have come from Tun-huang, now Ōtani Collection of the Ōtani University Library, Osaka, black ink on paper

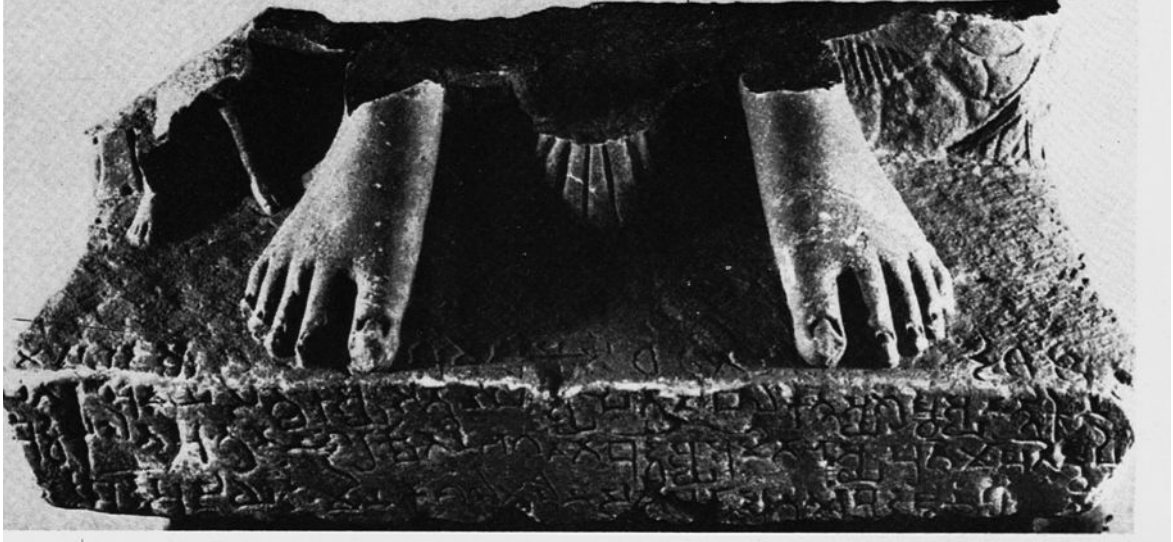


Fig. 6.17a Fragment of stone pedestal with four-line inscription bearing the name of Amitābha Buddha and dated year 26 (the first year of Huvīṣka, ca. 153 A.D.), from Govindnagar, Mathurā, red sandstone, Archaeological Museum, Mathurā



Fig. 6.17b Inscribed pedestal of Amitābha Buddha from Govindnagar, Mathurā, in Fig. 6.17a





Fig. 6.17c Bodhisattva (Buddha) from Maholi, sandstone, Mathurā Museum





Fig. 6.17d Bodhisattva (Buddha) from Śrāvastī, Indian Museum, Calcutta

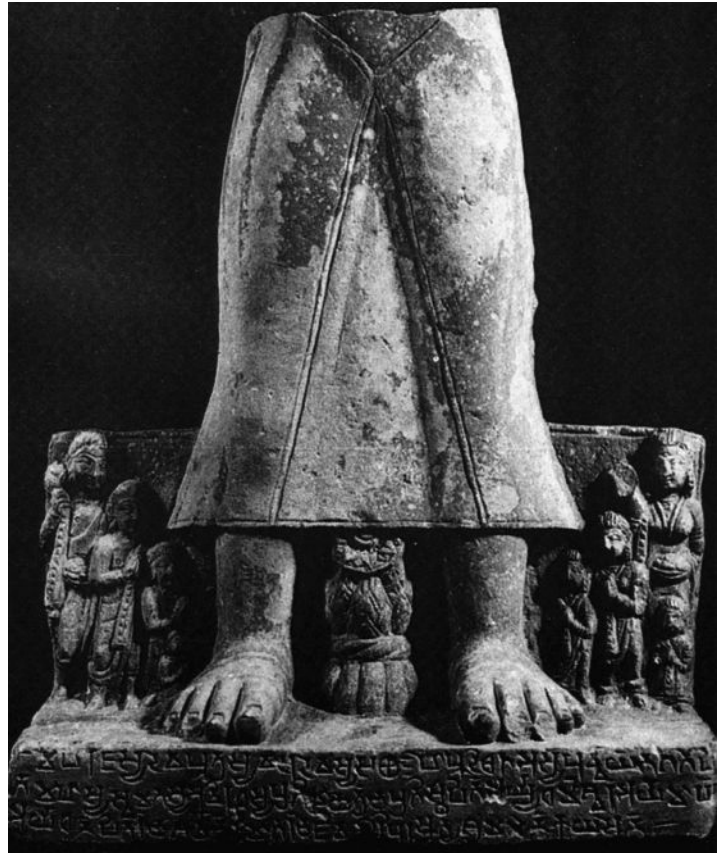


Fig. 6.17e Lower torso of Bodhisattva (Buddha), Mathurā Museum, dated year 93, reign of Vasudeva (ca. 220 A.D.)



Fig. 6.17f Veneration of the Buddha by the three Kāśyapa brothers, relief from Shotorak, Afghanistan, schist, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.



Fig. 6.18 Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā with two Bodhisattvas, Indra and Brahmā, possibly from Sahrī-Bahlōl, Claude de Marteau Collection, Brussels, gray schist





Fig. 6.19 Large relief stele with dharmachakra Buddha, from Mohammad Nari, Gandhara, ca. early 5th century



Fig. 6.20a Stele with dharmachakra Buddha and numerous figures, possibly Amitabha in Sukhavati, grey schist, ca. late 4<sup>th</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Peshawar Museum





Fig. 6.20b Detail of Buddha and lotus pedestal of relief stele in Fig. 6.20a



Fig. 6.20c Detail of Buddha of Fig. 6.20a



Fig. 6.20d Detail of right standing attendant Bodhisattva and adjacent seated figures from the relief stele of Fig. 6.20a





Fig. 6.20e Standing left attendant Bodhisattva and seated adjacent figures from the relief stele of Fig. 6.20a



Fig. 6.20f Figures in the upper quadrant at the main Buddha's left, detail of the relief stele in Fig. 6.20a



Fig. 6.20g Figures in the mid zone at the main Buddha's stele in Fig. 6.20a



Fig. 6.20h Detail of figures in the upper right corner (to main Buddha's left), relief stele in Fig. 6.20a





Fig. 6.20i Lower right corner of the relief stele in Fig. 6.20a, showing figure touching a petal on the main Buddha's lotus pedestal



Fig. 6.20j Lower left corner of the relief stele in Fig. 6.20a

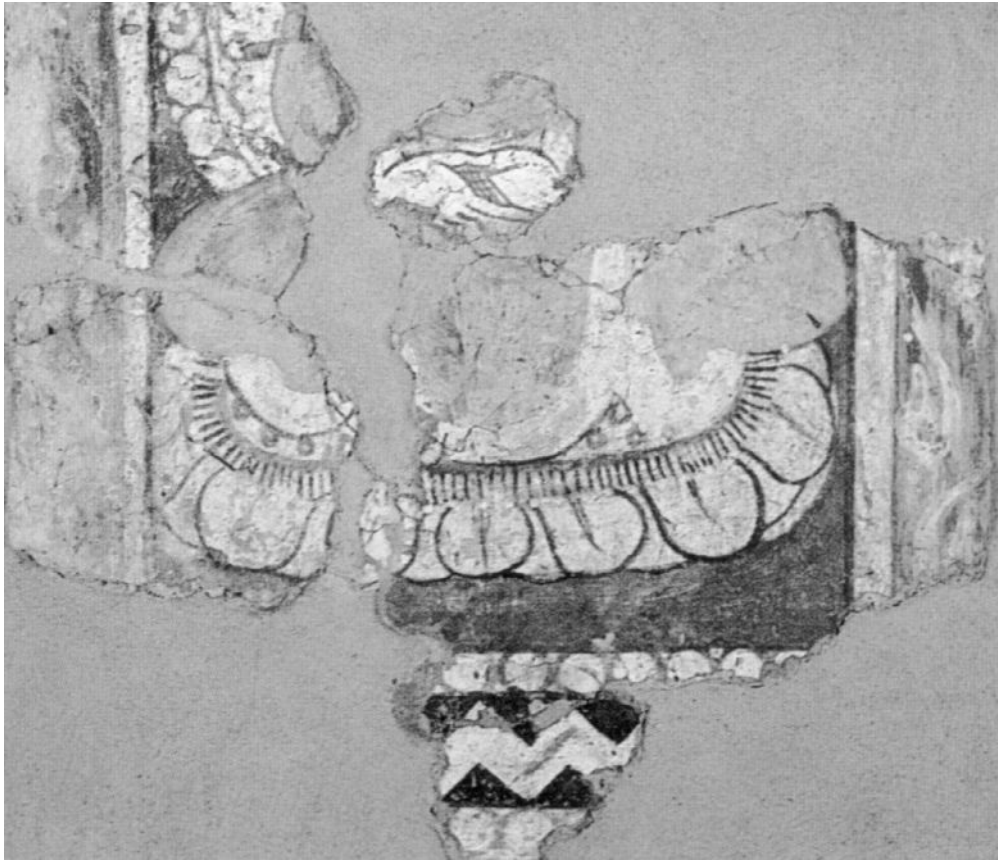


Fig. 6.21 Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal, fragment of a wall painting, upper register, southwest zone, Temple B, Karadong, Keriya (near Khotan), Southern Silk Route



Fig. 6.22 Lower part of a pedestal showing a cross-ankled Maitreya, Gandhāra, ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, schist, Museum für Indische Kunst (now known as the Museum of Asian Art), Berlin

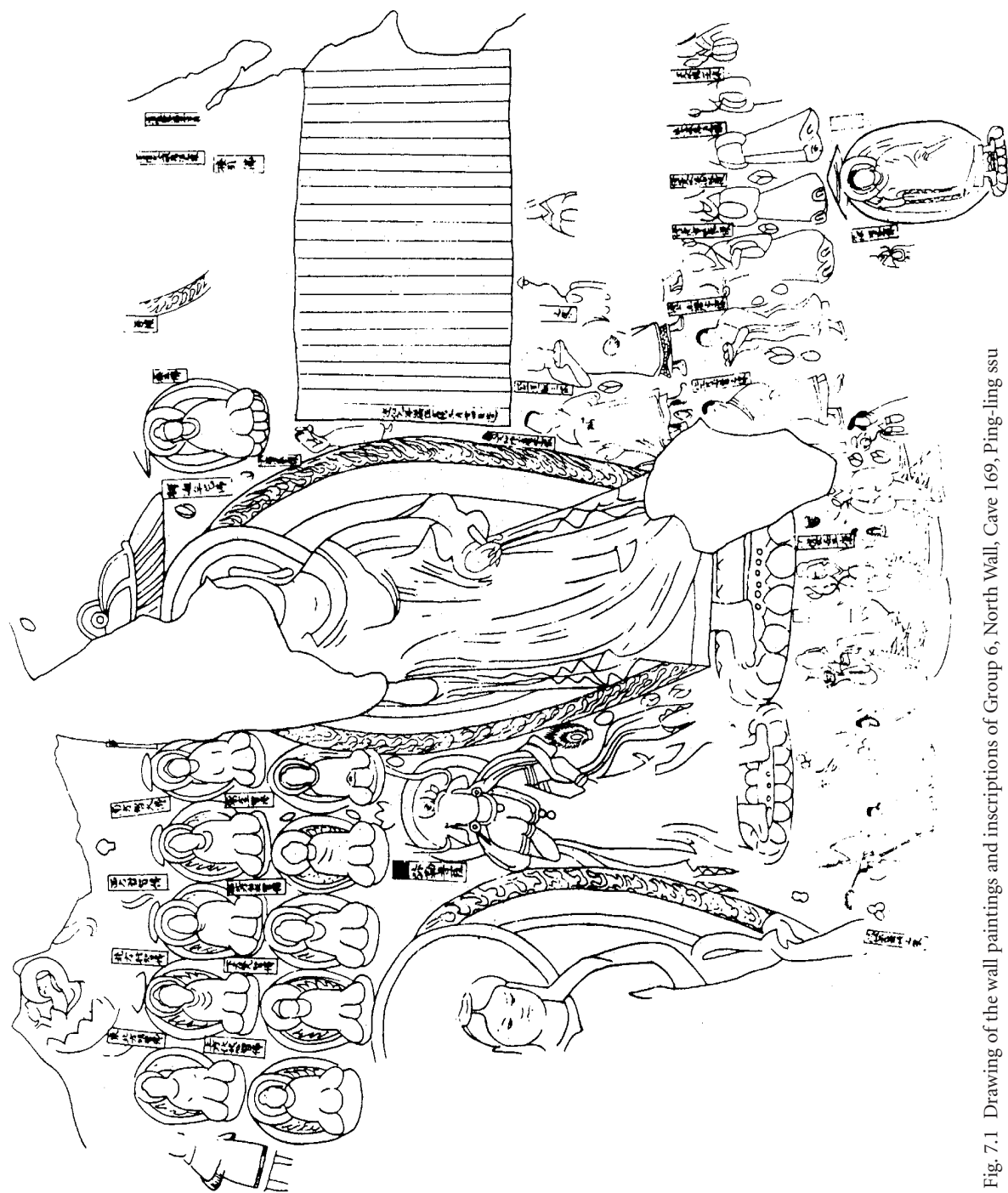


Fig. 7.1 Drawing of the wall paintings and inscriptions of Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 7.2 View of the wall inside the Group 6 niche showing wall paintings at main Buddha's left, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



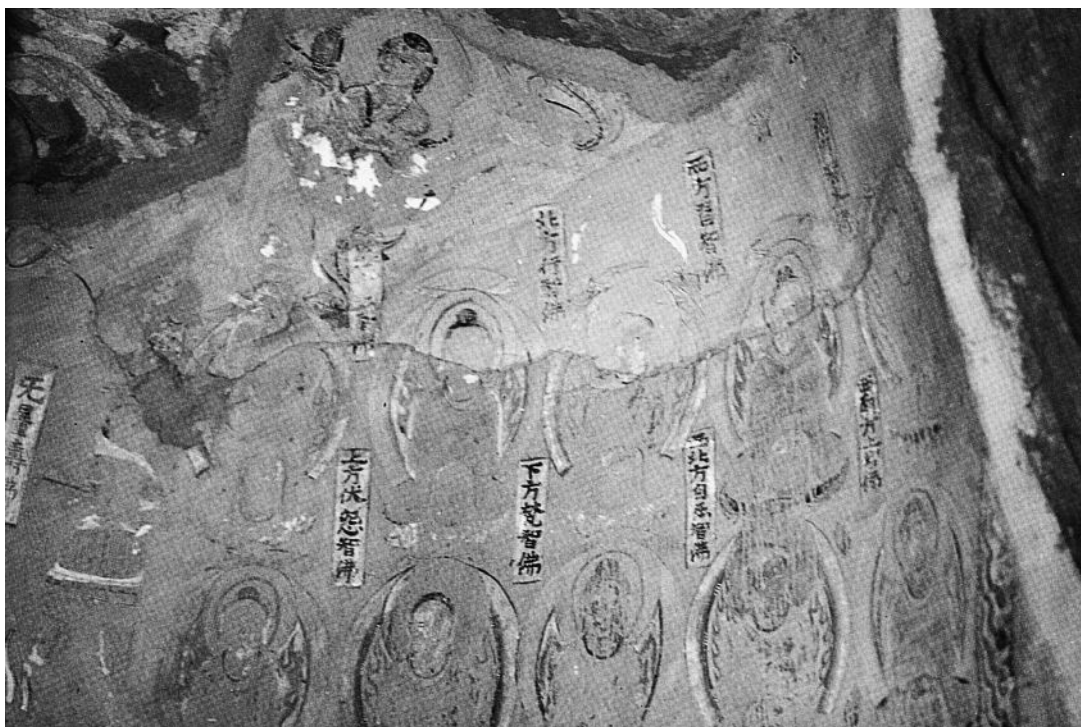


Fig. 7.3a Wall paintings inside the Group 6 niche: the ten-direction Buddhas, guardian and reborn soul, 424 A.D., North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

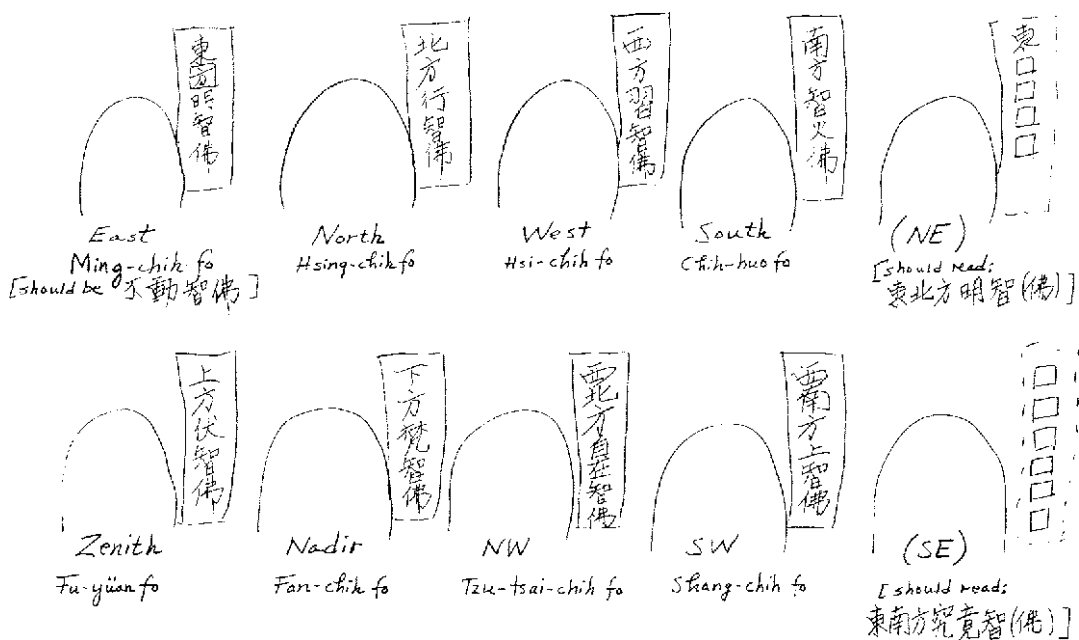


Fig. 7.3b Diagram of the ten-direction Buddhas inside the Group 6 niche, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

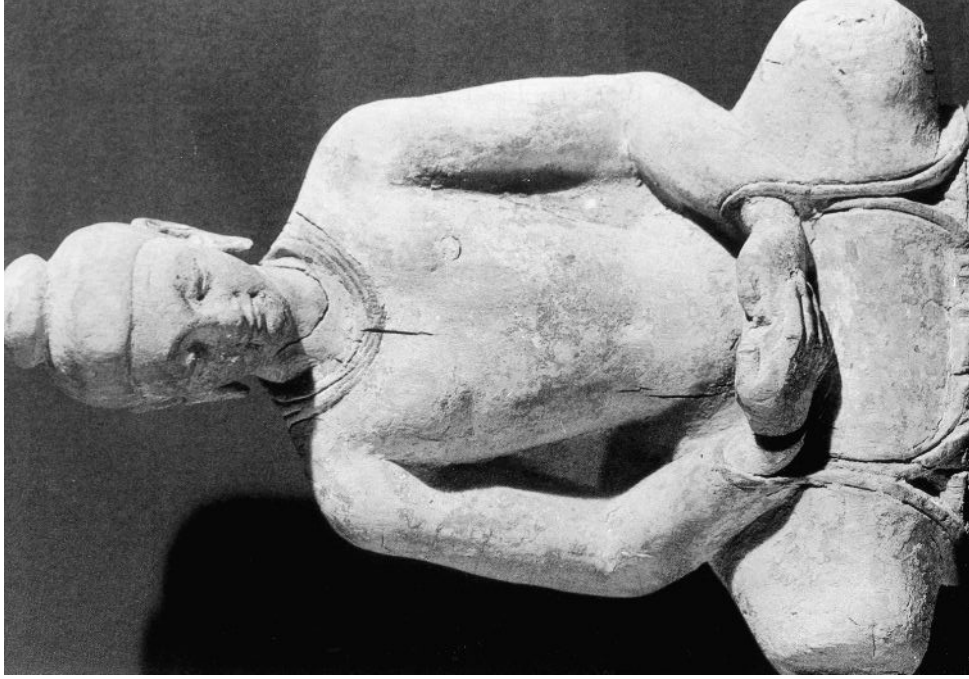


Fig. 7.4 Dhyanāsana Buddha in plain robe, from the stupa court, Western Group, Tumshuk-Iagh, Tumshuk, Northern Silk Road, ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century, wood, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



Fig. 7.5a Guardian figure, wall painting, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.

Fig. 7.5b Drawing of the guardian figure in Fig. 7.5a

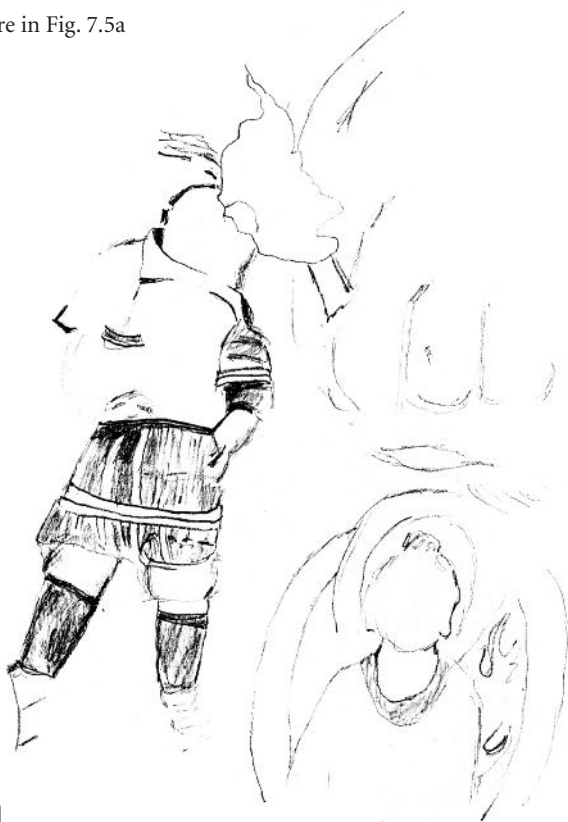


Fig. 7.6 Sculptures at the southeast entrance (Guardians R28 [right] and Buddha R29), Rawak Stupa Court, Khotan, ca. late 3<sup>rd</sup> – early 4<sup>th</sup> century ↓







Fig. 7.7 Reborn souls, yakṣas and lotus flowers on the upper levels of the ceiling, northwest corner of the antechamber, Tomb No. 1 at Chang-ch'ôn, Chip-an, North Korea, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



Fig. 7.8 View of Group 6 niche showing wall painting of Śakyamuni and main inscription, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 7.9a Maitreya Bodhisattva, wall painting, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 7.9b Bodhisattva (?), wall painting, left wall of antechamber, Cave 4, Kizil, Kucha

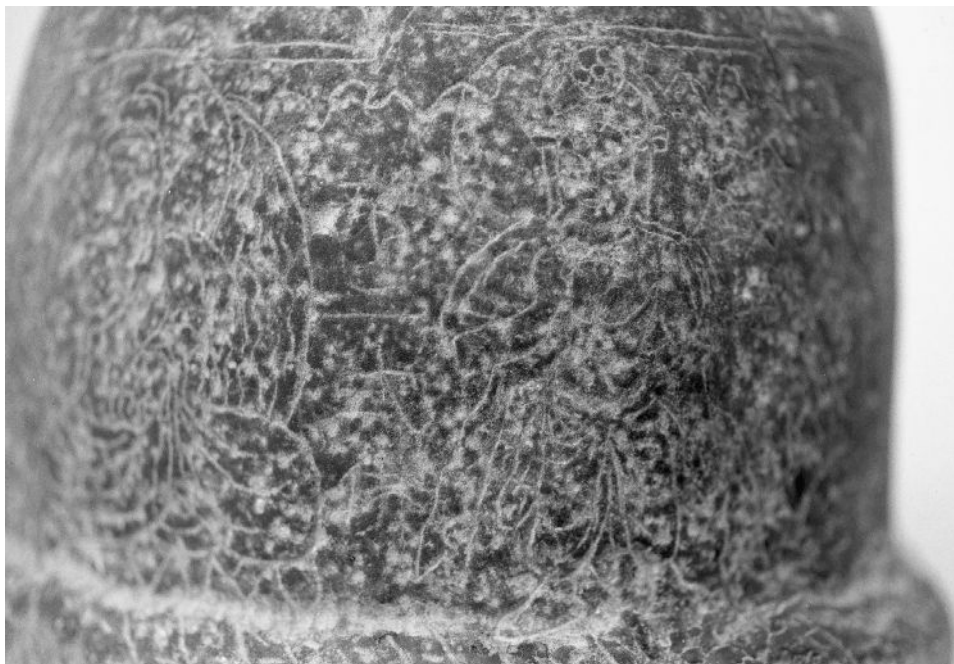


Fig. 7.9c Standing Maitreya Bodhisattva, miniature stone stupa (shih-t'a) of Chi-te, from Tun-huang, Northern Liang, ca. 426 A.D.



Fig. 7.9d Drawing of Maitreya Bodhisattva in Fig. 7.9c





Fig. 7.10a Main inscription, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

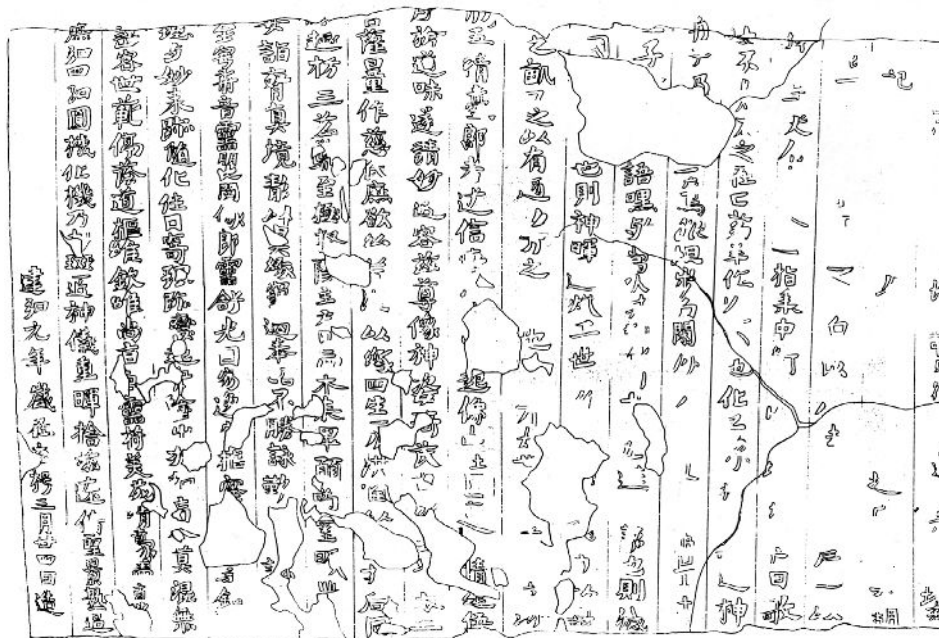


Fig. 7.10b Drawing of the characters of the main inscription by Chang Pao-hsi, Group 6, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 7.10c Detail of end lines of the main inscription (last line containing the date), Group 6, North wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 7.11 Donors and donor inscriptions in three rows below main inscription, wall paintings of Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 7.12a Upper row of donors showing monks T'an-ma [wu]-pi and Tao-jung, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



←

Fig. 7.12b Detail of T'an-ma [wu]-pi and Tao-jung, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 7.13a Row of donors and inscriptions inside the niche below the Śākyamuni painting, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 7.13b Drawing of row of donors in Fig. 7.13a



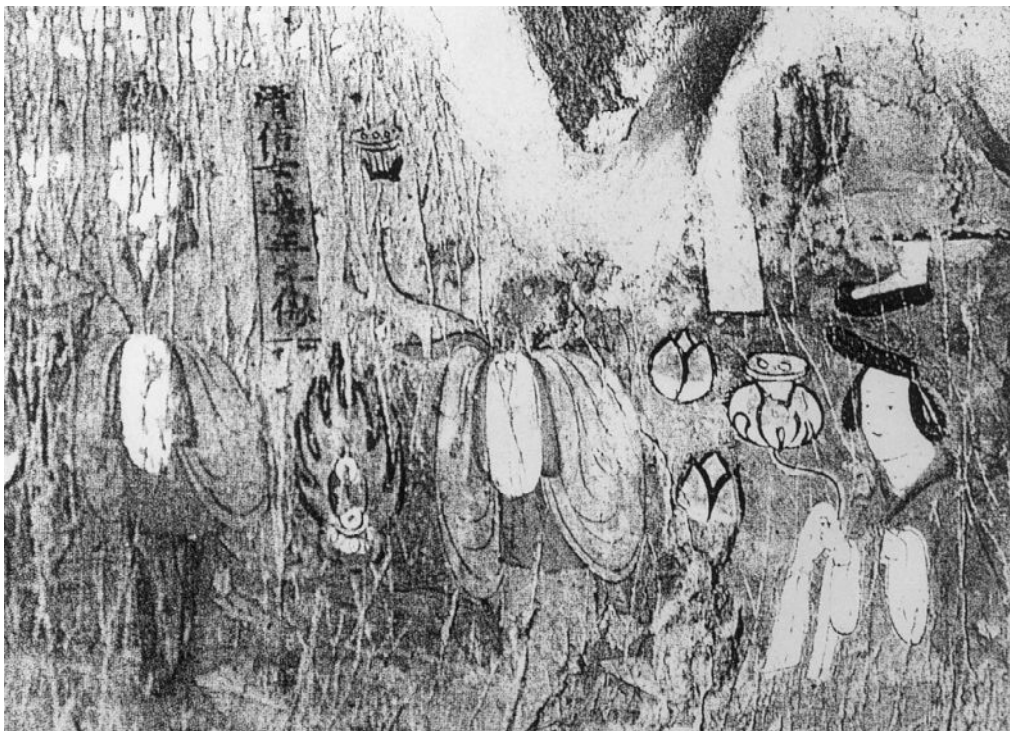


Fig. 7.13c Detail of row of donors, inscriptions, flaming jewels and lotus buds in Fig. 7.13a, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



←

Fig. 7.13d Detail of female donor (last in the row) in Fig. 7.13a, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



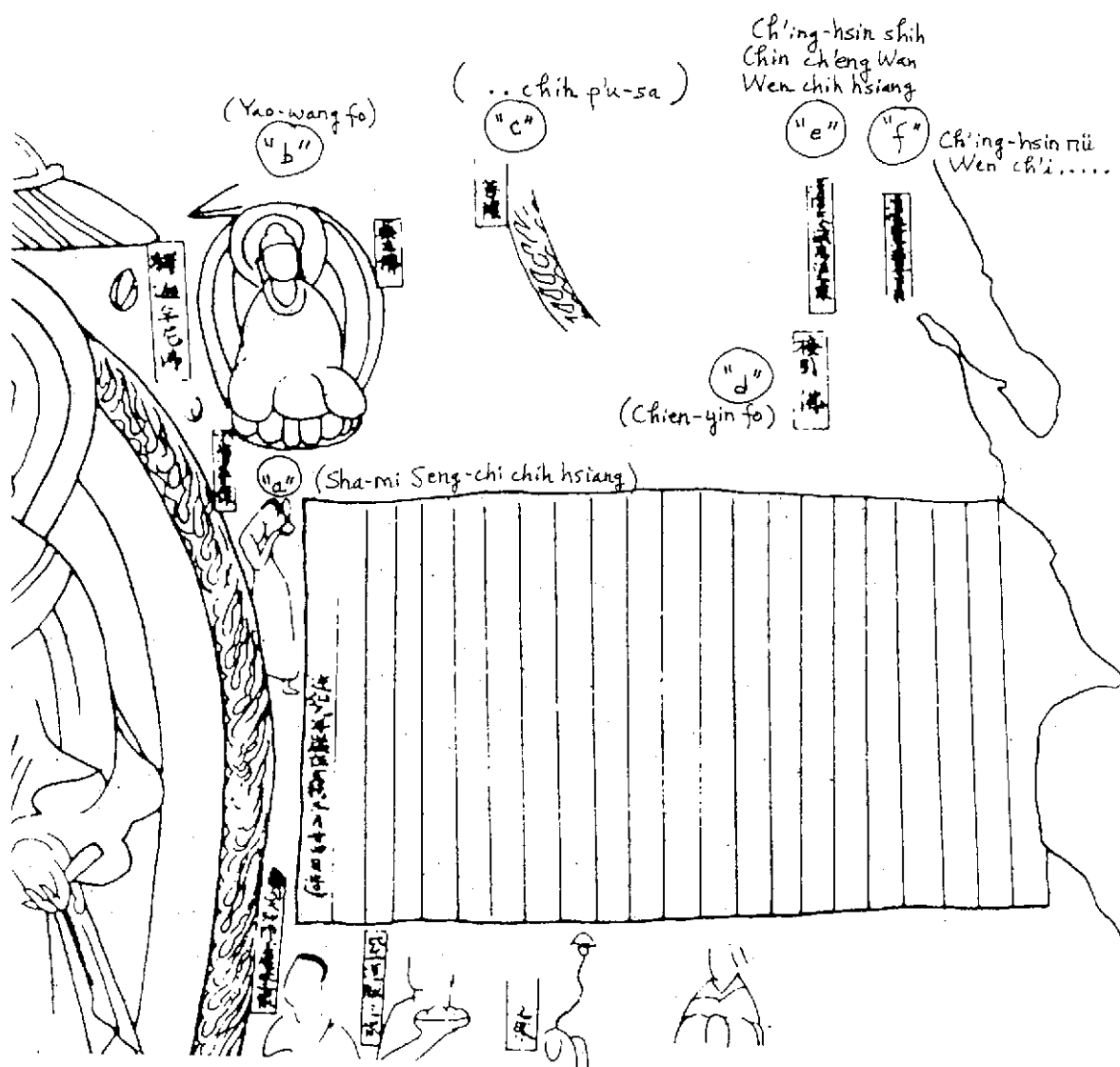


Fig. 7.14a Drawing of the wall paintings and inscriptions surrounding the main inscription, Group 6, North Wall, cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.

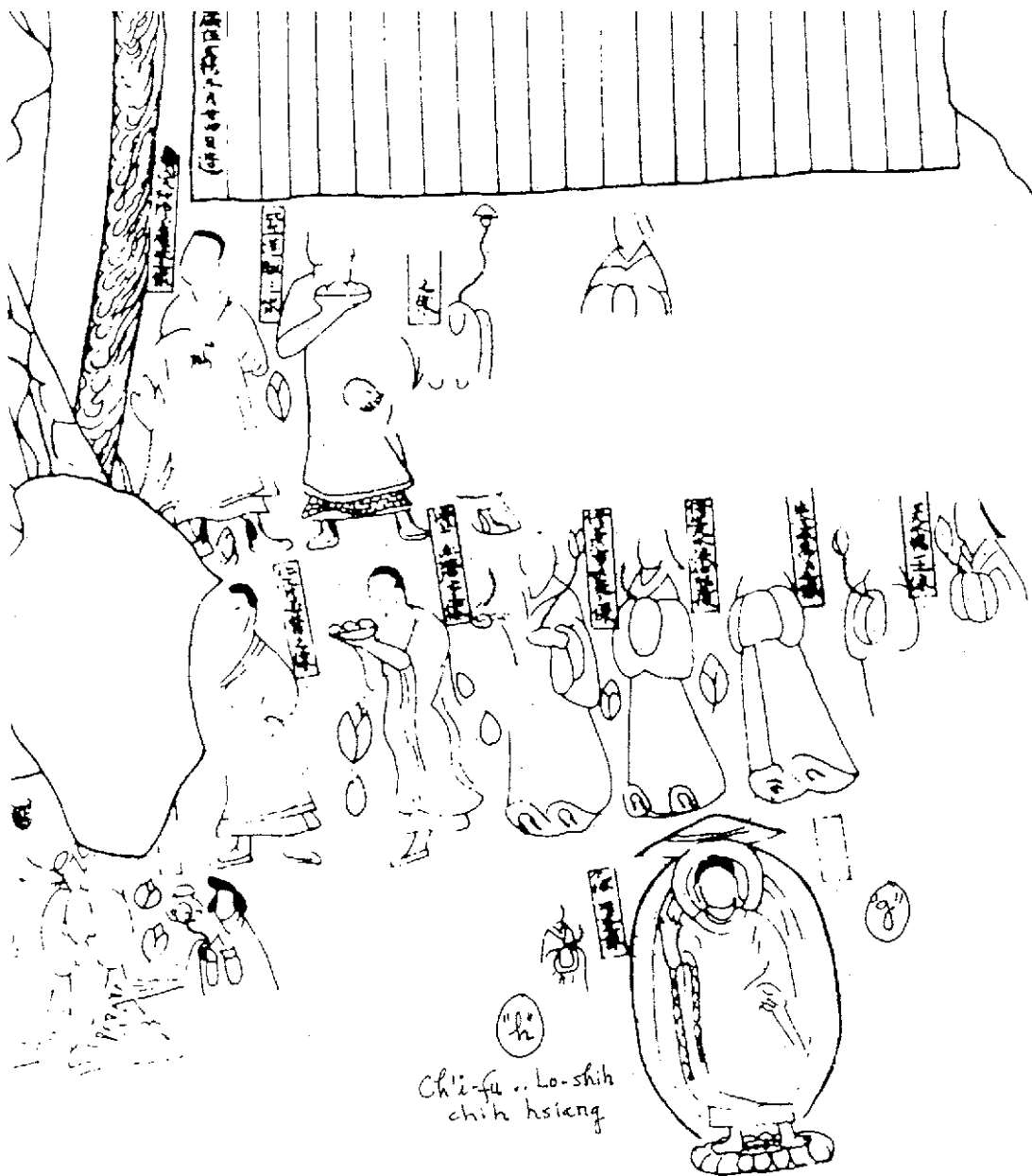


Fig. 7.14b Drawing of wall paintings and inscriptions below the main inscription, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 7.15 “Śākyamuni Buddha”, wall painting below the second row of donors below the main inscription, Group 6, North Wall, Cave 169, Pingling ssu, 424 A.D.



Fig. 7.16a View of Groups 7, 9-12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 7.16b Standing Buddhas of Group 7 (upper) and of Group 9 (lower left), North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 7.16c Standing Buddhas of Group 7, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



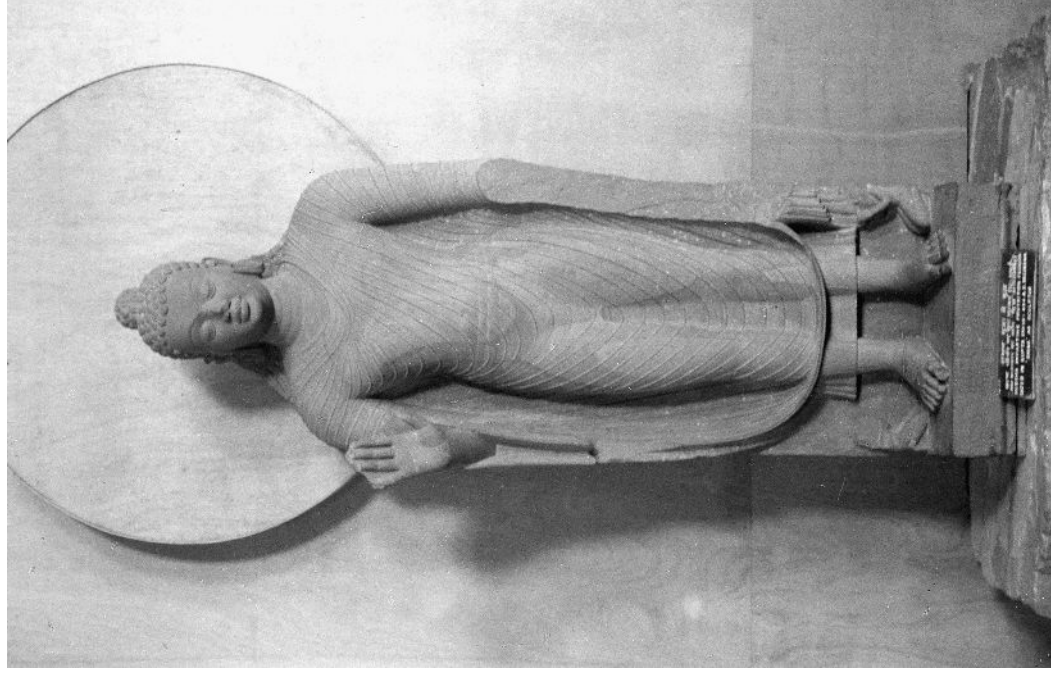


Fig. 7.17 Standing Buddha, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, red sandstone, Gupta period, dated year 115 (434 A.D.), Archaeological Museum, Mathurā



Fig. 7.18 Standing Buddha of the Śrāvastī Miracle, from Kham Zargar, Kāpīsī, Afghanistan, schist, ca. late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century, Kabul Museum (1975)



Fig. 7.19 Head of the standing Buddha, Group 7, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.20a Detail of the mandorla (head and body halos) of the two standing Buddhas, Group 7, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.20b Detail of head halo of the right standing Buddha, Group 7, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.20c Detail of mandorla of left standing Buddha, Group 7, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



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Fig. 7.21a Head halo of Buddha D19, outside the southwest enclosure wall (north side), Rawak Stupa, Khotan, ca. first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 7.21b Fragment of a mandorla, from Rawak Stupa, wood with remains of pigments, from the Gropp expedition, now in the Museum, Bremen, Germany





Fig. 7.22 Three standing Buddhas, Group 9, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.23 Left (west) standing Buddha, Group 9, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.24a Standing Buddha, from Shotorak, Afghanistan, schist, National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul





Fig. 7.24b Standing Buddha sculptures (right to left: R56-R61), Style IV, outside the southeast enclosure wall, Rawak Stupa, Khotan



Fig. 7.25a The central and right (east) standing Buddhas, Group 9, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.25b Central standing Buddha of Group 9, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.

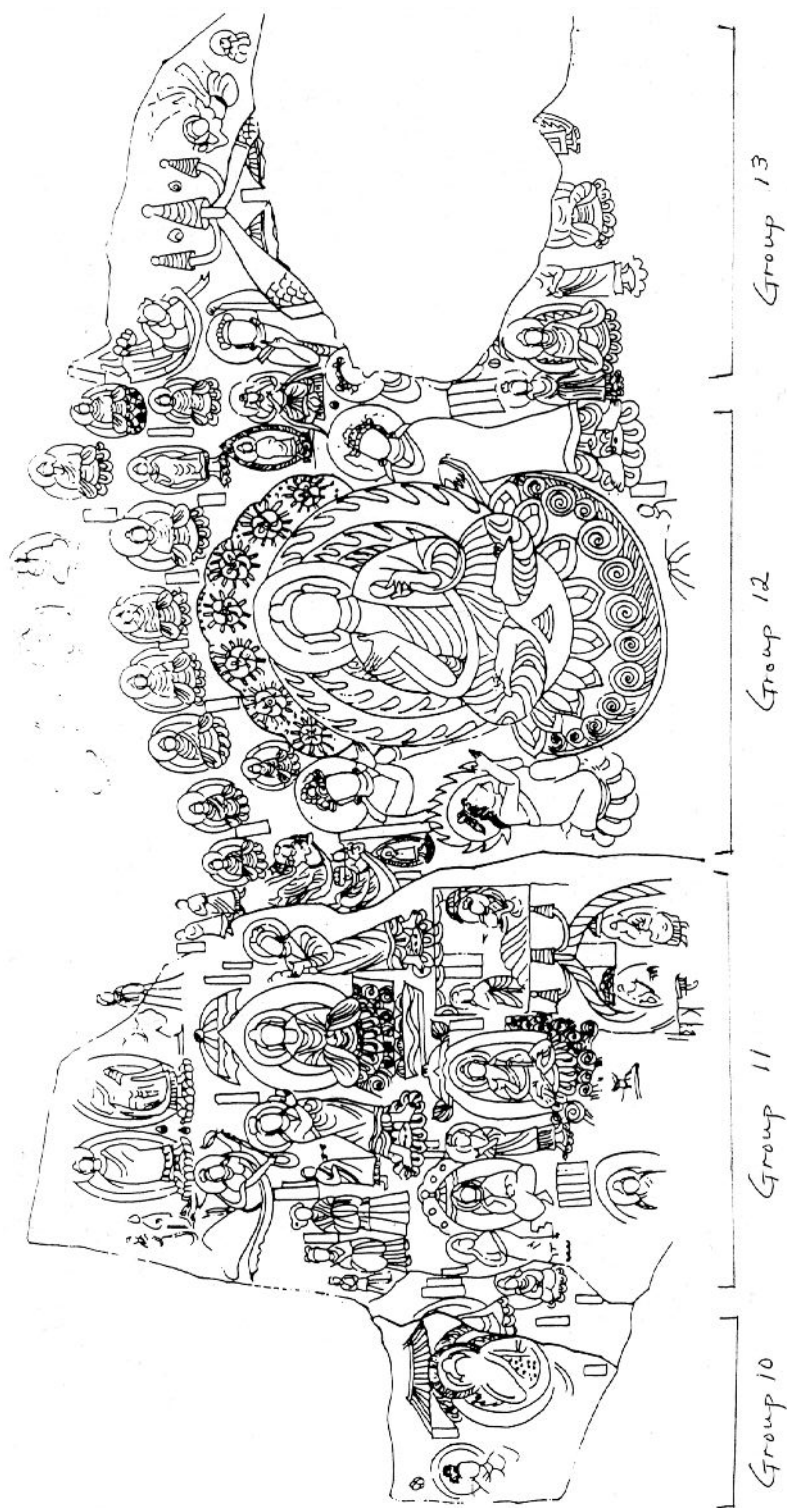


Fig. 7.26 Diagram of Groups 10, 11, 12 and 13, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu





Fig. 7.27a Group 10, earlier under layer wall painting (right corner) and later upper layer wall painting with seated Buddha and right attendant Bodhisattva



Fig. 7.27b Detail of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and image inscriptions on the under layer wall painting of Group 10, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 400 A.D.

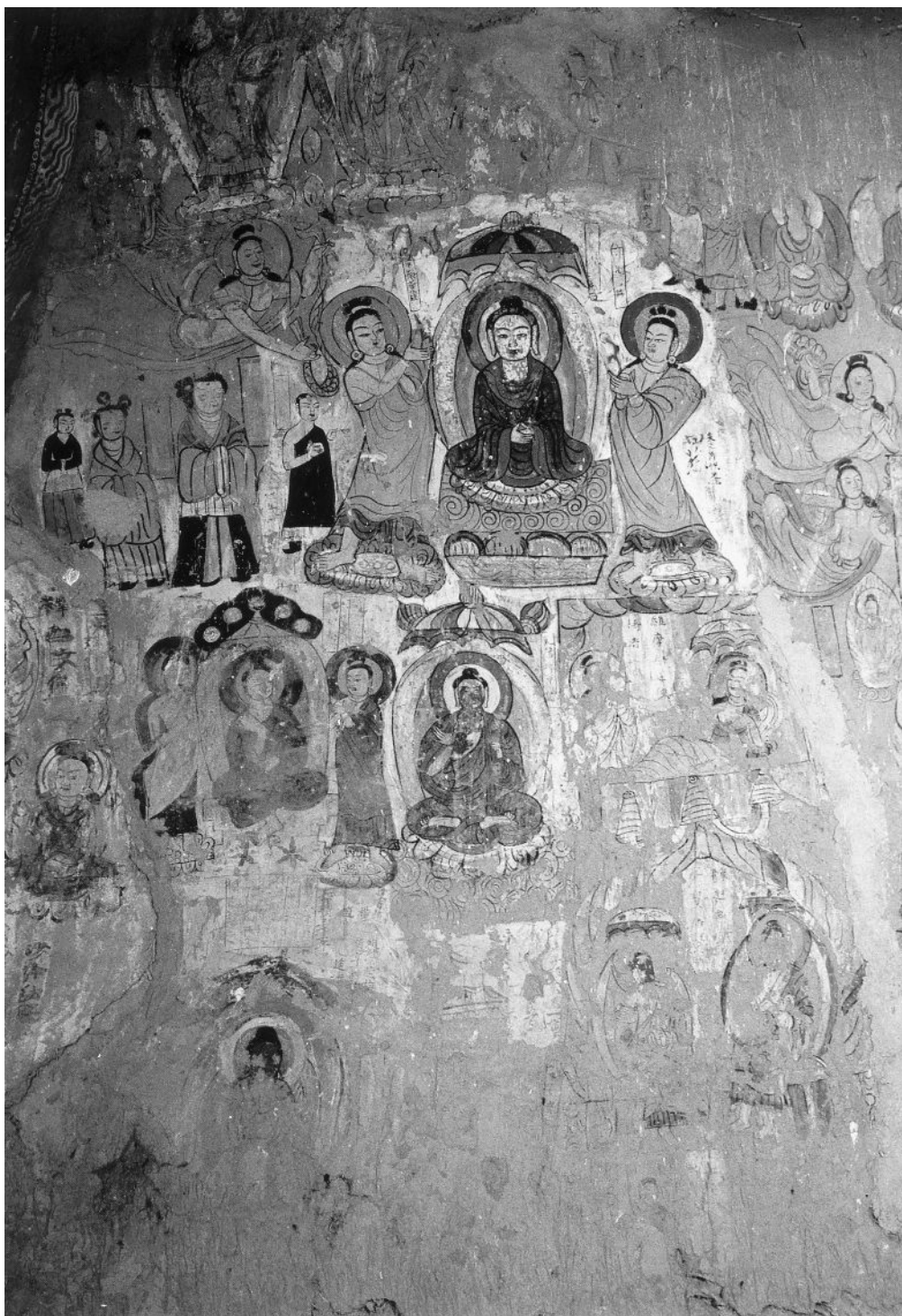


Fig. 7.28 Wall paintings of Group 11, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.29 Upper zone of Group 11 wall paintings, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.

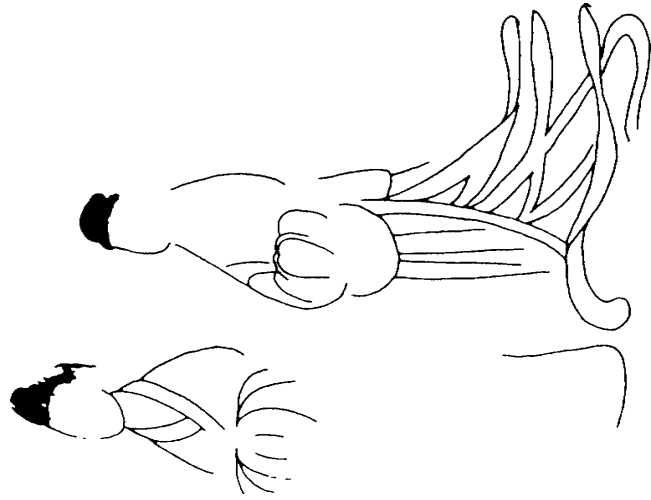


Fig. 7.30 Drawing of two donors, Group 11, upper zone, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.31a Detail of triad, upper zone of Group 11 wall paintings, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.31b Dhyānāsana Buddha and two attendants, Group 11, wall paintings, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.32a Detail of standing Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, paintings on the domed ceiling, GK Cave 20, Kumtura, Kucha



Fig. 7.32b Detail of pedestal and worshippers, painting on domed ceiling, GK Cave 20, Kumtura, Kucha

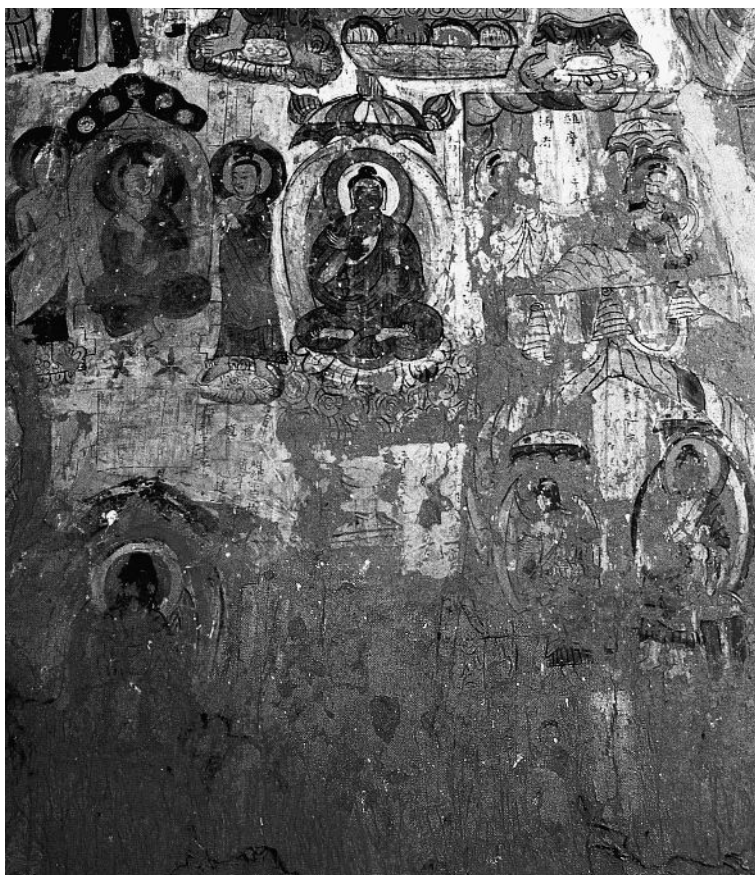


Fig. 7.33 Middle and lower zones of wall paintings in Group 11, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.34 Detail of the Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna scene, lower zone of the Group 11 wall paintings, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.35 Wall paintings of Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.36 Detail of the large seated Buddha, Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.37 Detail of the right attendant and other figures, main Buddha's right side, wall painting, Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.

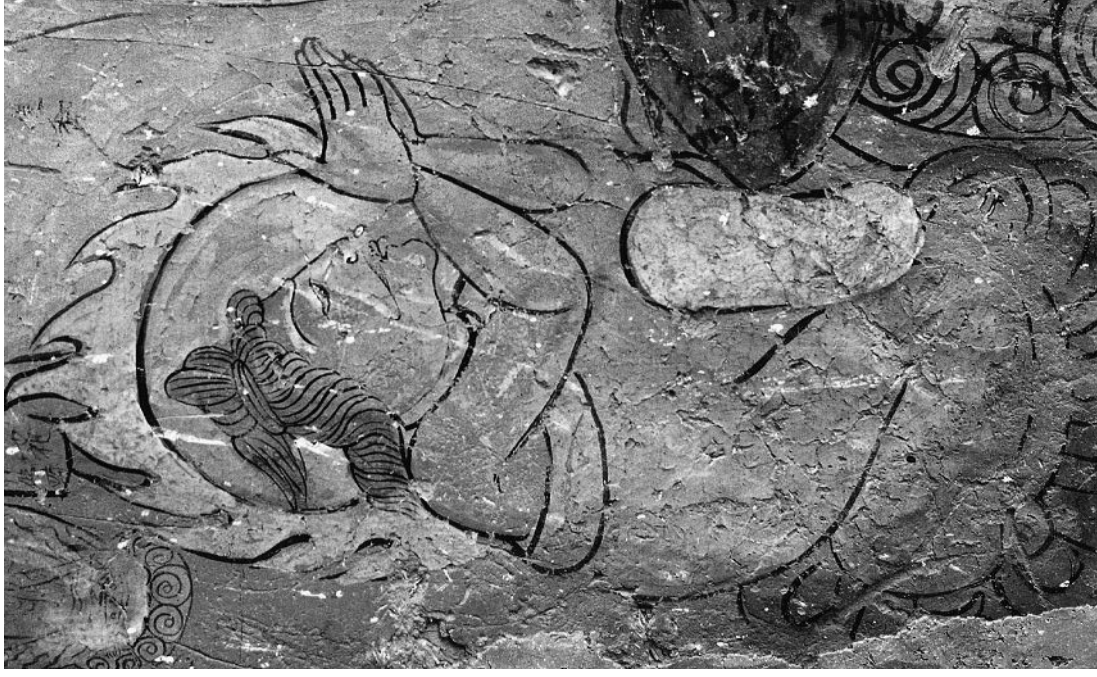


Fig. 7.38a Kneeling figure, right side of main Buddha, wall painting, Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.38b Bust of a man, so-called "Heraeus" (or "Heraios") coin, silver tetradrachm, possibly ca. mid 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., private collection, Japan



↑  
Fig. 7.39 Two monks with inscriptions, detail of Group 12 wall paintings, upper zone, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.40 Multiple Buddhas above the main Buddha, upper zone of wall paintings of Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.





Fig. 7.41 Group of five figures (four Buddhas with a cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva) above the main Buddha, upper zone of wall paintings, Group 12, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.42 Miniature stone stupa (shih-t'a) of Kao Shan-mu, from Chiu-ch'üan, Northern Liang, dated 428 A.D.



Fig. 7.43 Upper portion of Group 13 wall paintings, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.

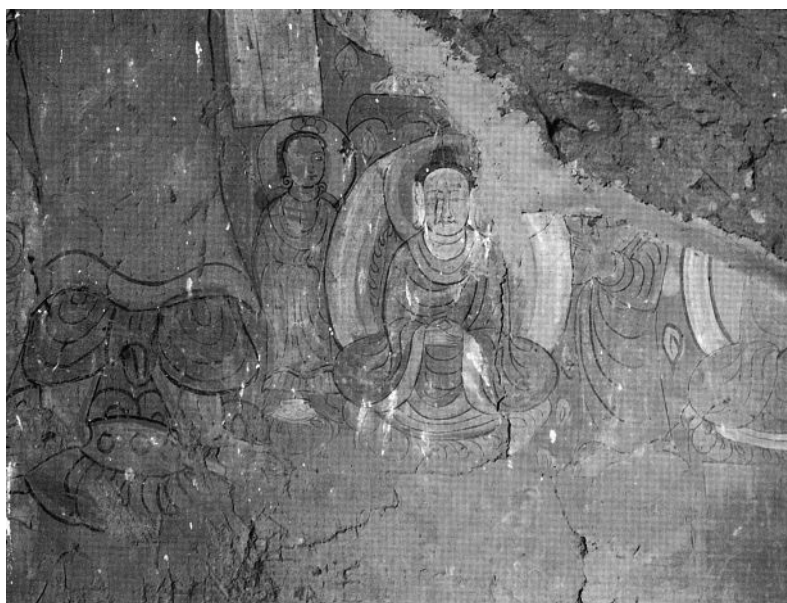


Fig. 7.44 Dhyānasana Buddha and attendants, lower part of Group 13, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



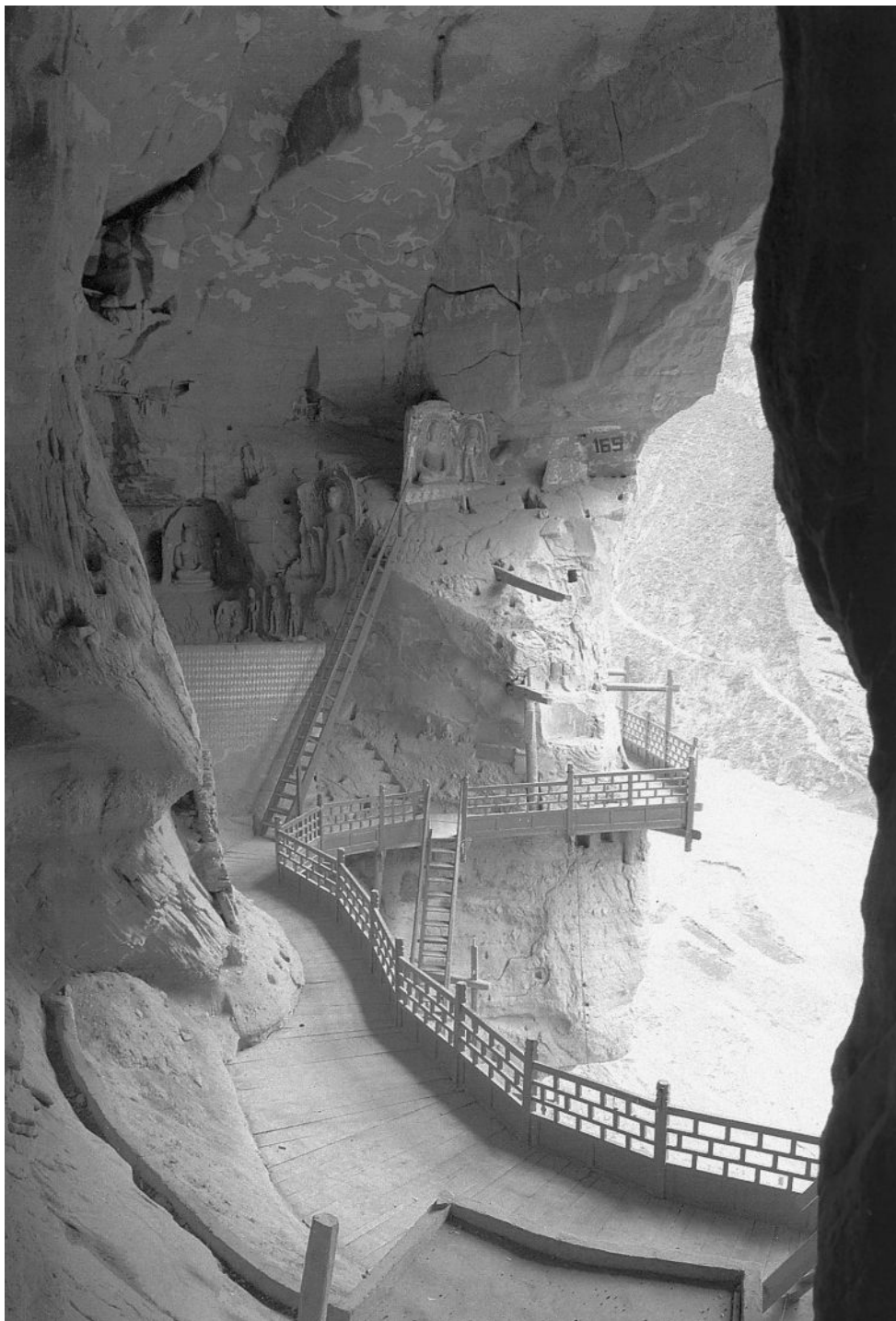


Fig. 7.45 View of front (east) portion of the North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu

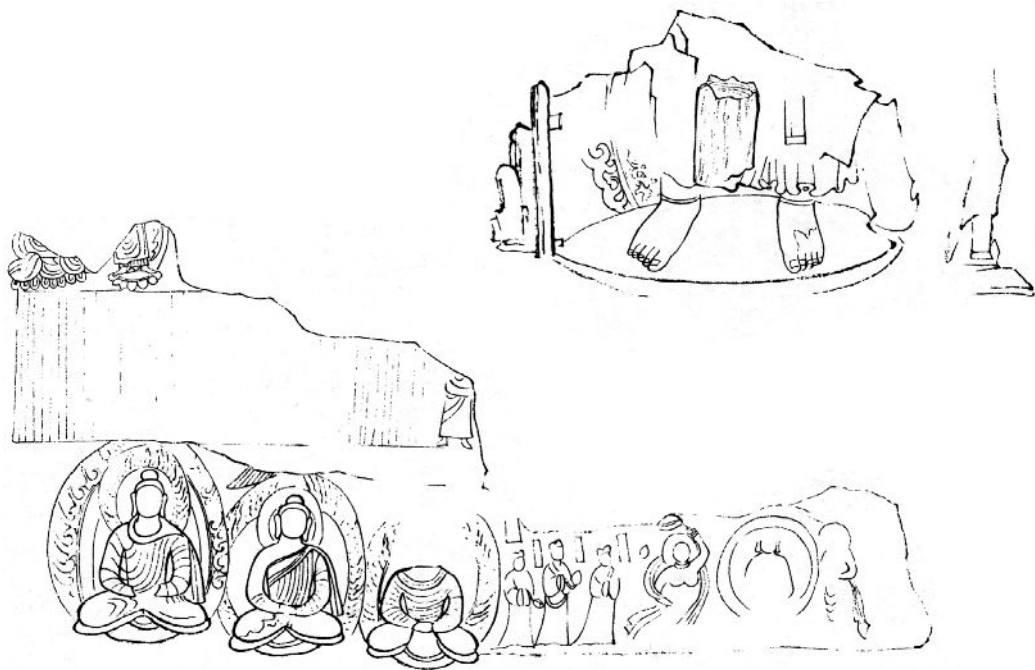


Fig. 7.46 Drawing of Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu



Fig. 7.47 Three dhyanāsana Buddhas, Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-428 A.D.





Fig. 7.48a Left (west) dhyānāsana Buddha of three Buddhas, Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-428 A.D.



Fig. 7.48b Central and right (east) dhyānāsana Buddhas of three Buddhas, Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D., ca. 428 A.D.



Fig. 7.49 The sutra text and monk image wall painting above the niche with the three Buddhas, Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-428 A.D.

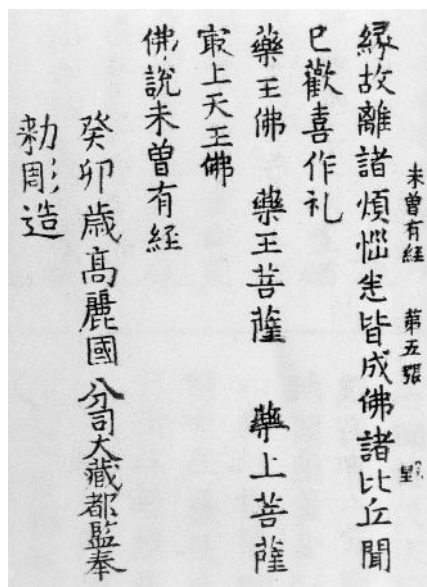


Fig. 7.50 The end portion of the sutra *Fo-shuo Wei-ts'eng yu ching*, from the Tripiṭaka Koreana, based on the Haein-sa woodblocks of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century





Fig. 7.51 Wall paintings of triad and three donor figures, Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-428 A.D.



Fig. 7.52 Detail of the three donors, Group 14, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-428 A.D.



Fig. 7.53a Group 3 niche with dhyānasana Buddha, standing Bodhisattva and Vajrapāṇi, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 428-430 A.D.



Fig. 7.53b Drawing of the Group 3 niche, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 428-430 A.D.





Fig. 7.55 Detail of Vajrapāṇi, Group 3, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 428-430 A.D.

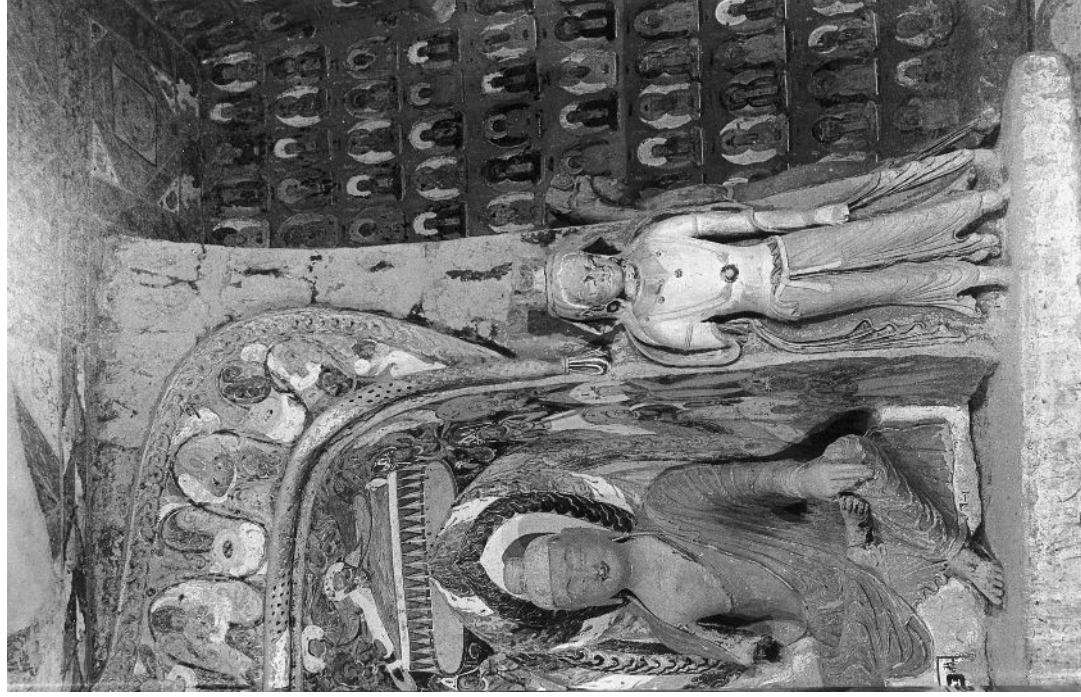


Fig. 7.54 Detail of the main images, Cave 259, Tun-huang, ca. 450's A.D.



Fig. 7.56a Wall painting, Group 3, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 428-430 A.D.

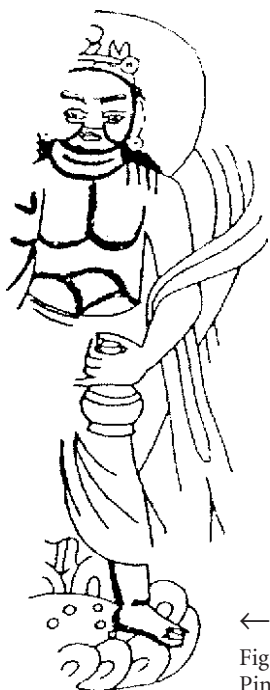


Fig. 7.56b Drawing of Bodhisattva on wall outside Group 3 niche, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 428-430 A.D.



Fig. 7.57 Buddha stele from Ahicchatra, red sandstone, dated year 32 (ca. 159 A.D.), Mathura school, National Museum, New Delhi





Fig. 7.58a Thousand Buddha wall painting panel, Group 15, North Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.

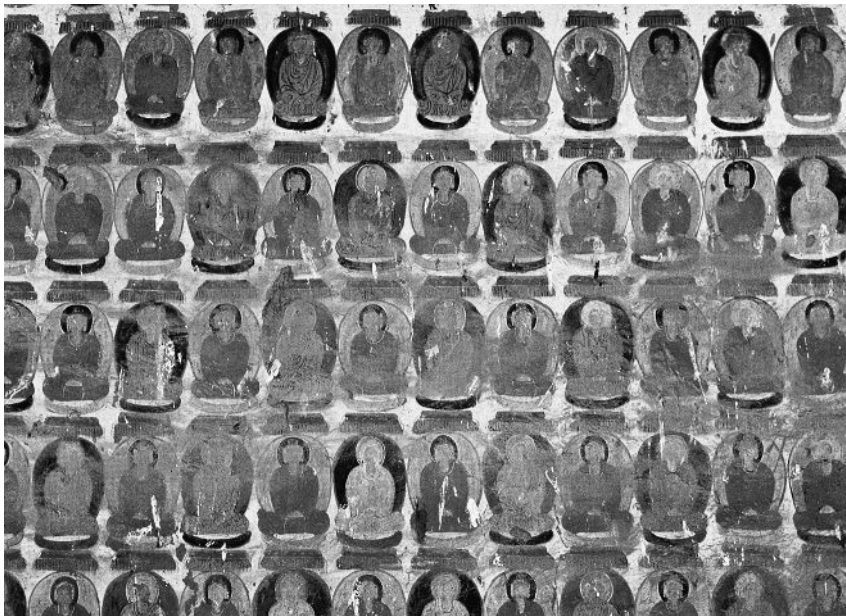


Fig. 7.58b Detail of thousand Buddha panel of Group 15 in Fig. 7.58a

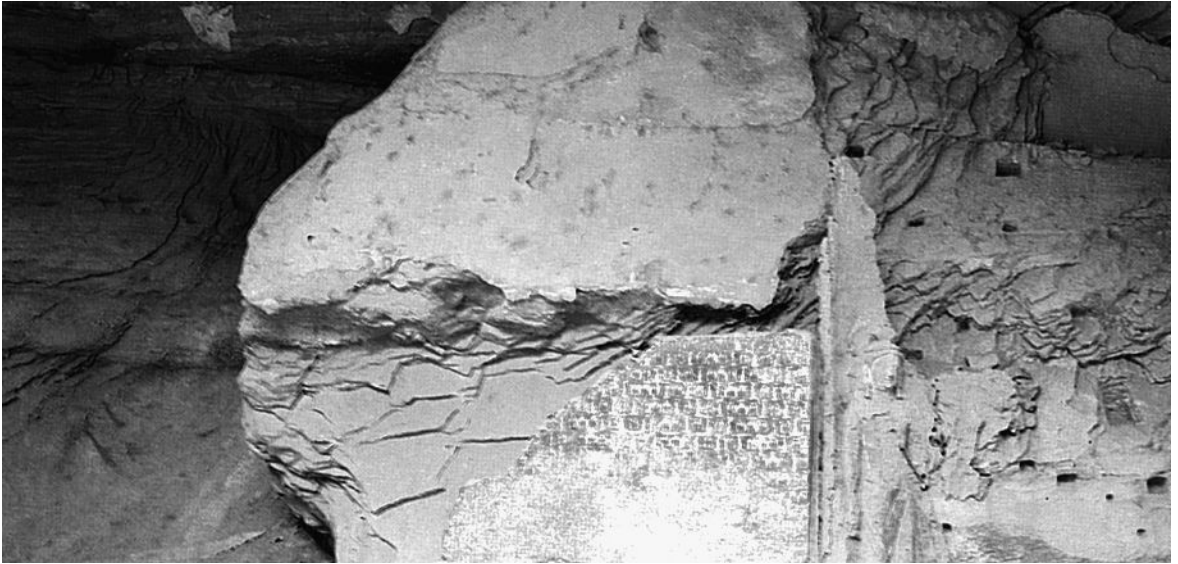


Fig. 7.58c Thousand Buddha wall painting panel, Group 19, West Wall, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425 A.D.



Fig. 7.59 Cave at Yeh-chi kou, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-430 A.D.





Fig. 7.60a Thousand Buddha wall painting, north wall, east side, Yeh-chi kou cave, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-430 A.D.



Fig. 7.60b Wall painting, north wall, east side, Yeh-chi kou cave, Ping-ling ssu, ca. 425-430 A.D.

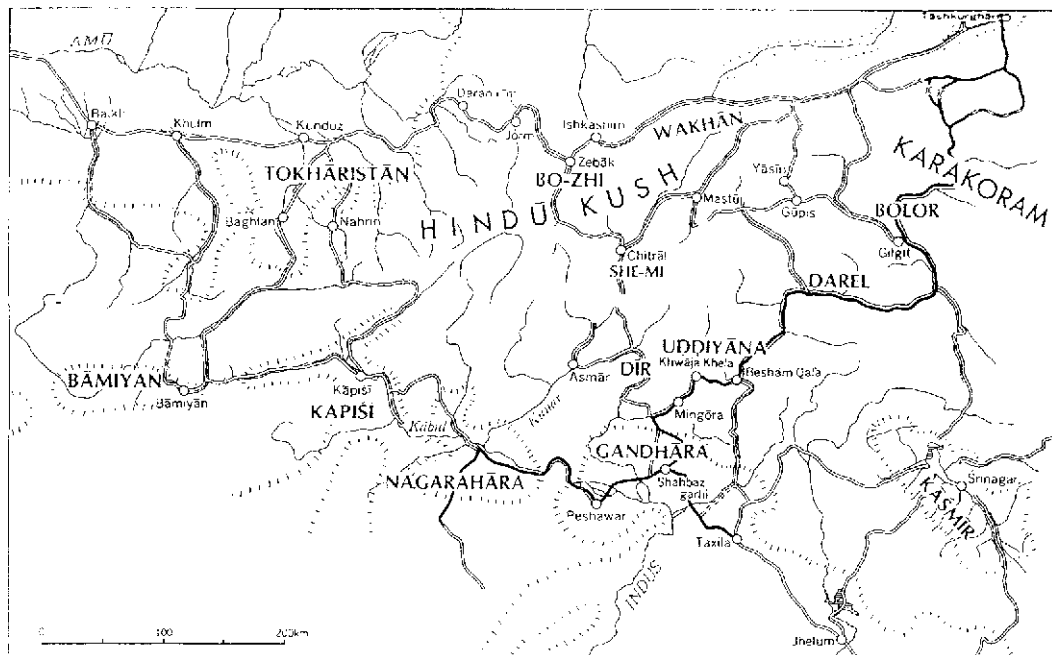


Fig. 8.1 Map of the route to Gandhāra taken by the Chinese pilgrim monk Fa-hsien in ca. 400 A.D.

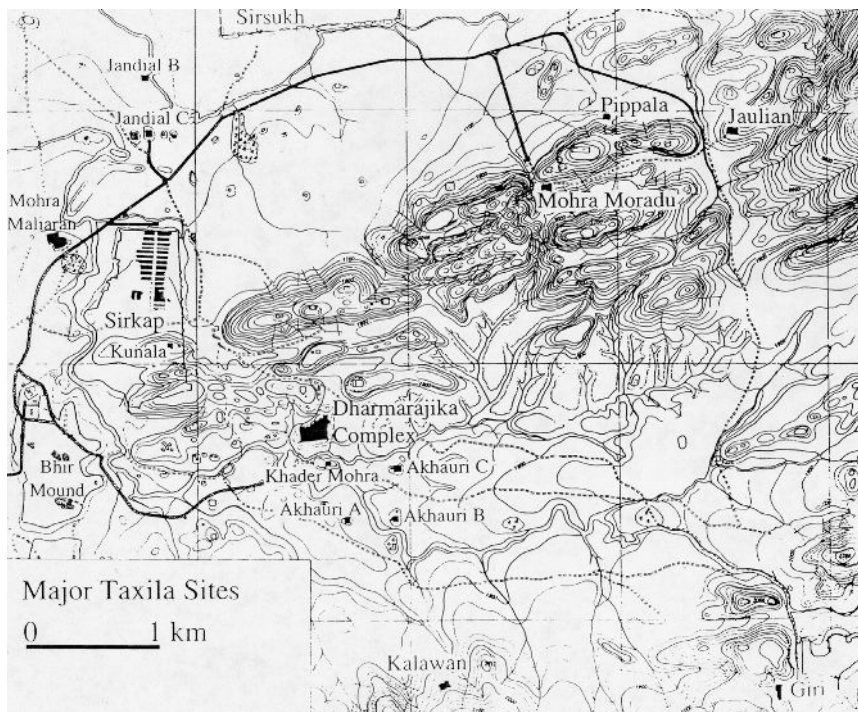


Fig. 8.2 Map of Taxila (Gandhāra) with major sites



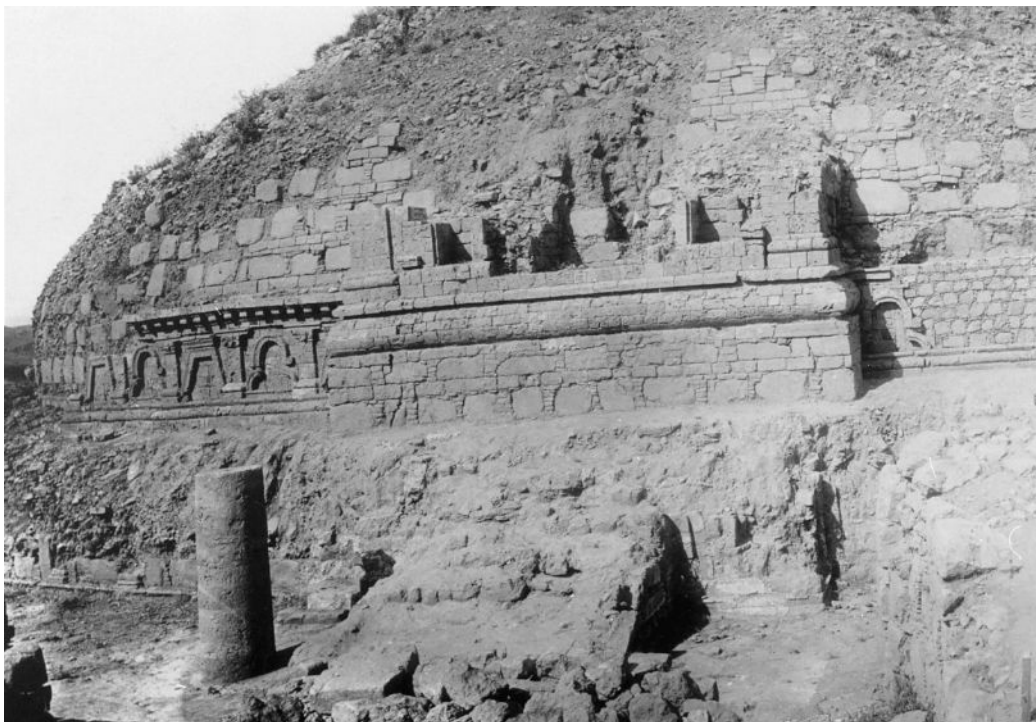


Fig. 8.3a Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila



Fig. 8.3b Stupa K1, from the south-east, Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila, Gandhara



Fig. 8.3c Central bay on the north face of Stupa K1, Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila

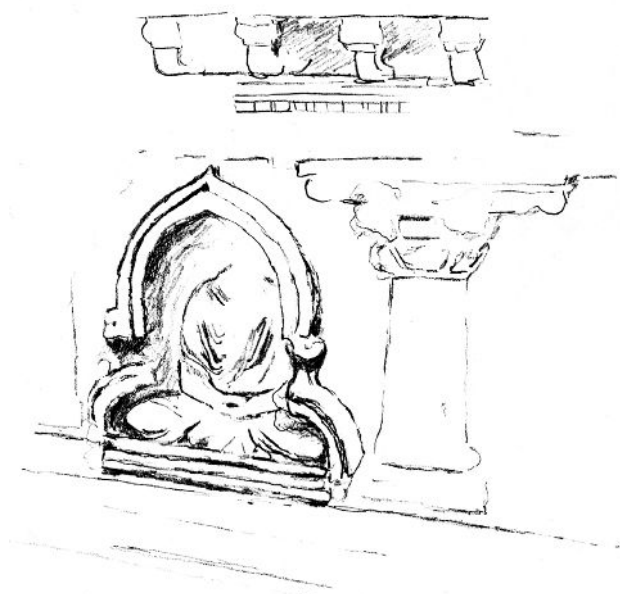


Fig. 8.3d Drawing of the stucco image in the central bay of the north face of Stupa K1, as seen in Fig. 8.3c



Fig. 8.3e Detail of the plinth of Stupa N4 from the east showing image remains in the central bay niche, Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila



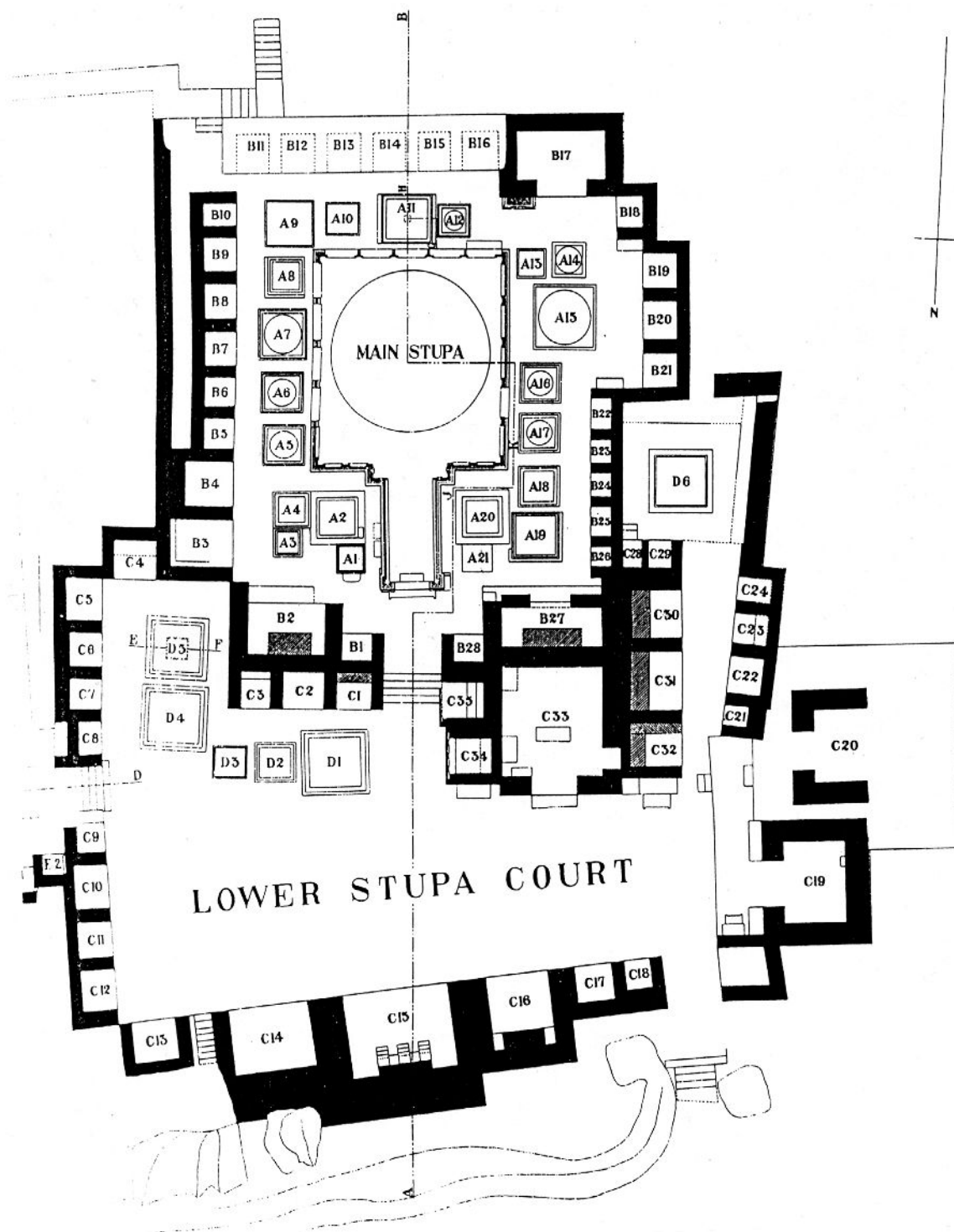


Fig. 8.4 Plan of the Stupa Court area at Jauliān Monastery, Taxila, Gandhāra

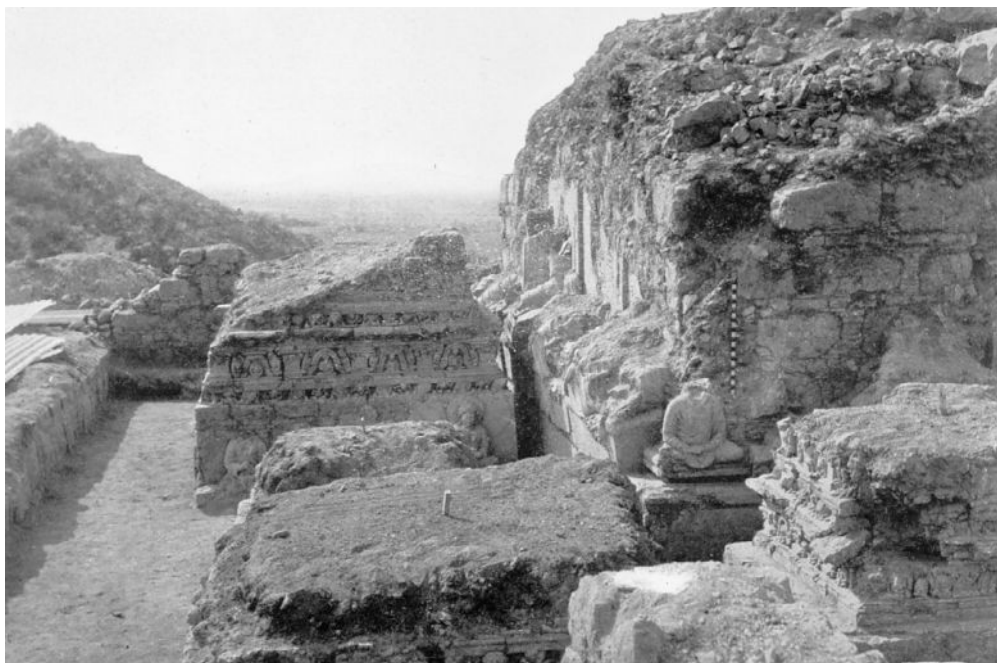


Fig. 8.5a Main Stupa Court, after excavation, from the southeast, Jauliān, Taxila

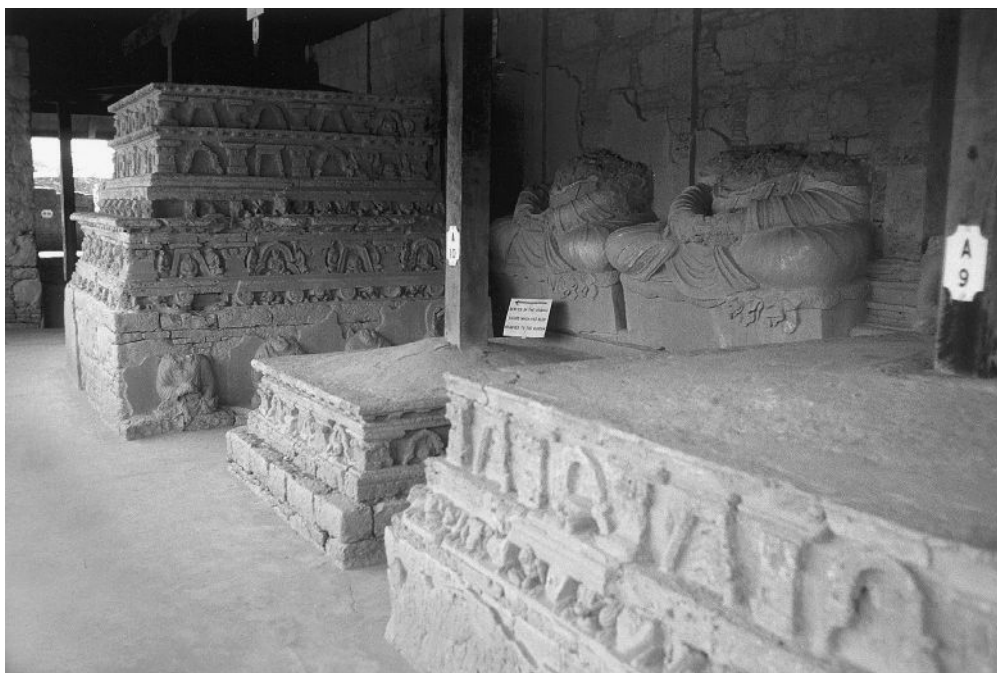


Fig. 8.5b South side of Main Stupa with images and subsidiary stucco Stupas A9, A10 and A11, after restoration, Jauliān, Taxila (1975)

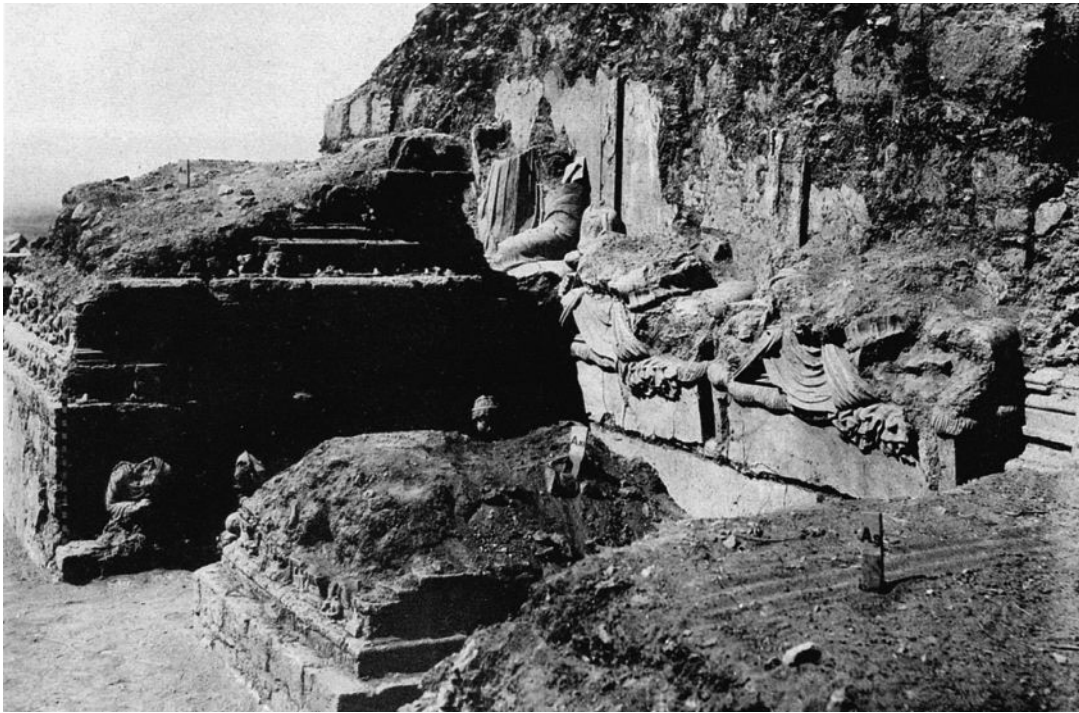


Fig. 8.5c South side of Main Stupa before restoration, Jauliān, Taxila



←  
Fig. 8.5d Central colossal dhyānāsana Buddha from the south wall of the Main Stupa, Jauliān, Taxila, clay and stucco, after restoration, Taxila Museum





Fig. 8.5e View of the Main Stupa Court from the northeast, after excavation, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.5f East wall of Main Stupa at south end showing remains of colossal Buddhas and small Buddhas on pilaster, after restoration, Jauliān, Taxila (1975)





Fig. 8.5g Small Buddhas on pilaster in Fig. 8.5f before restoration



Fig. 8.5h North side of Main Stupa and subsidiary Stupas A1, A2, A3 and A4, after excavation, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.5i Remains of Buddha figures on the north face (west side) of the Main Stupa, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.5j Small Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā, from the Main Stupa, Jauliān, Taxila



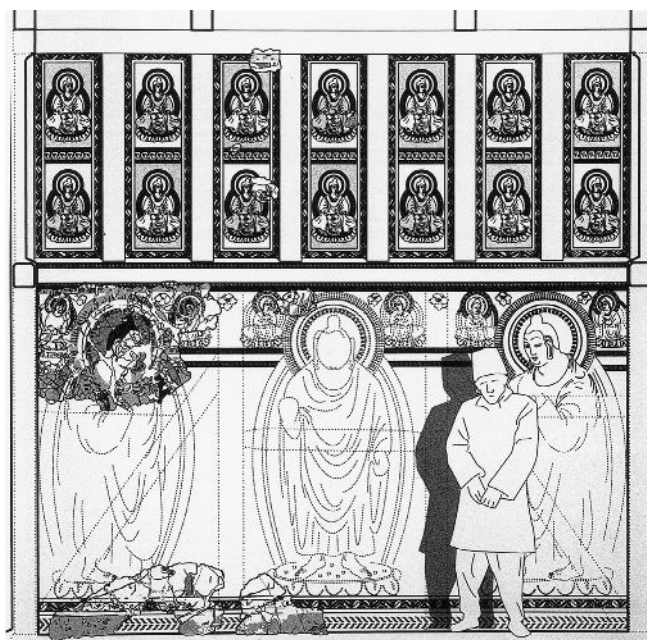


Fig. 8.6a Reconstruction drawing of the rear wall of Temple B, Karadong, Keriya (near Khotan), ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

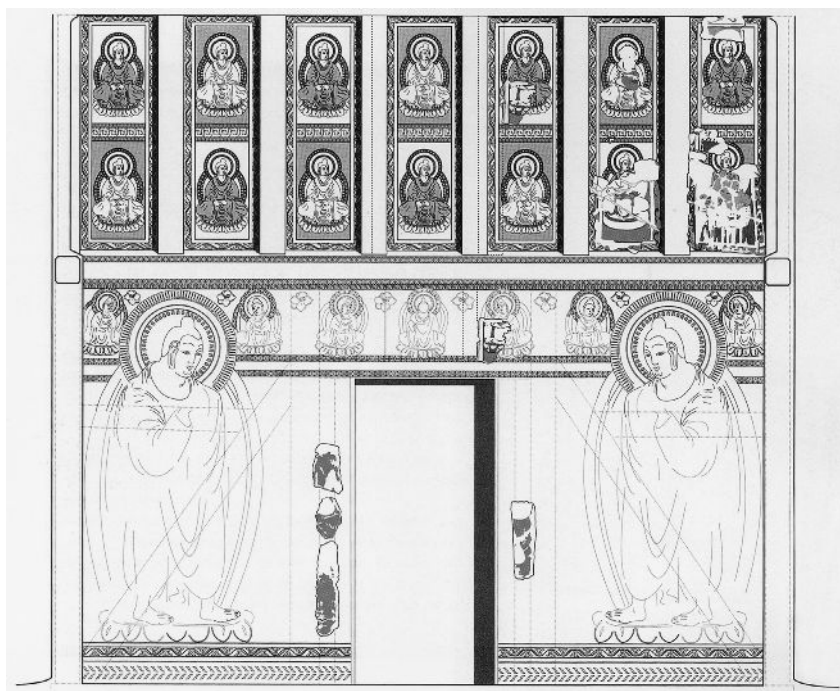


Fig. 8.6b Reconstruction drawing of the entrance wall of Temple B, Karadong, Keriya (near Khotan), ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



Fig.. 8.7a View of the monastery of Mohra Moradu with Main Stupa (right) and Vihara (left), from the north, Taxila, Gandhara

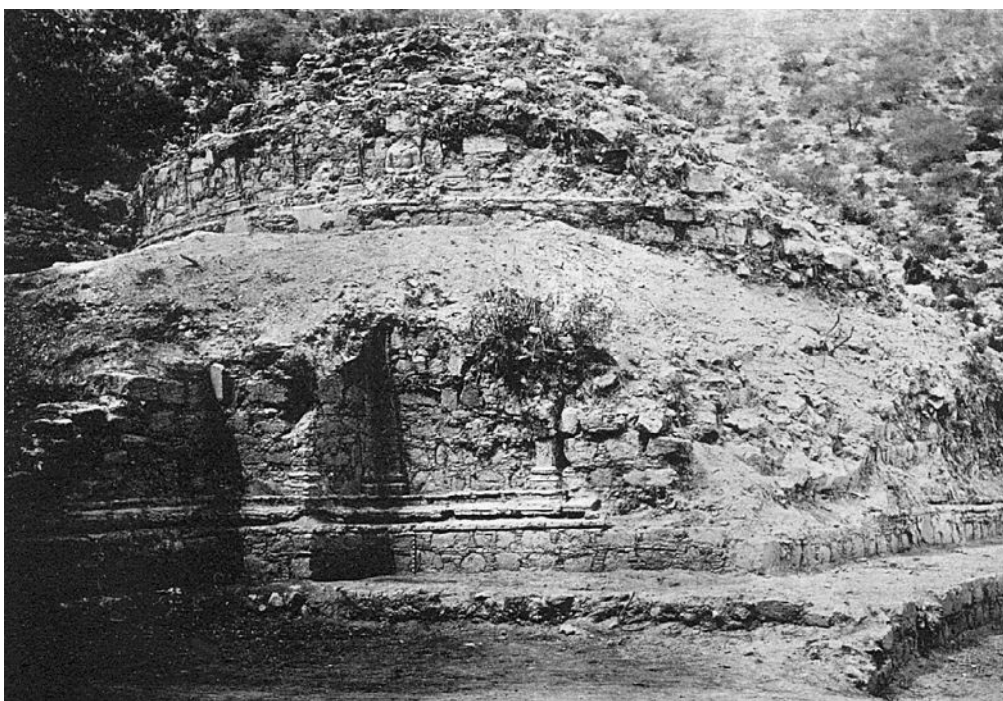


Fig. 8.7b View of the Main Stupa from the northeast, prior to restoration, Mohra Moradu, Taxila



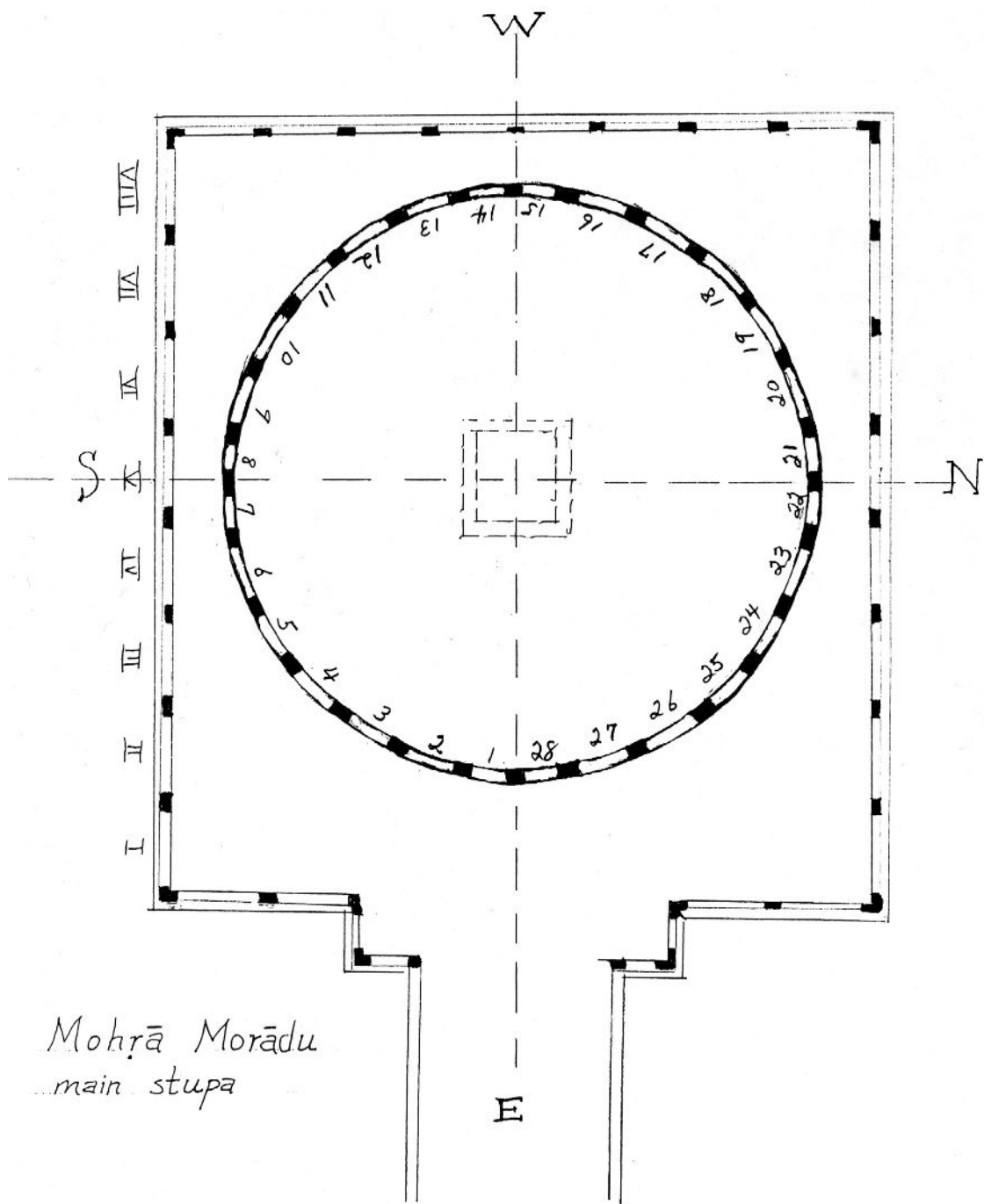


Fig. 8.7c Plan of the Main Stupa with numbering of image niches, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila



Fig. 8.7d East face (north side) with staircase and surviving images on the drum of the dome, Main Stupa, Mohra Moradu, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.8a East face (south side) with staircase and surviving images, Main Stupa, Mohra Moradu, Taxila



Fig. 8.8b Stucco image reliefs, *in-situ*, "bay V", south wall, Main Stupa, Mohra Moradu, Taxila





Fig. 8.8c Central colossal Buddha, *in situ*, south wall, Main Stupa, Jauliān,  
Taxila

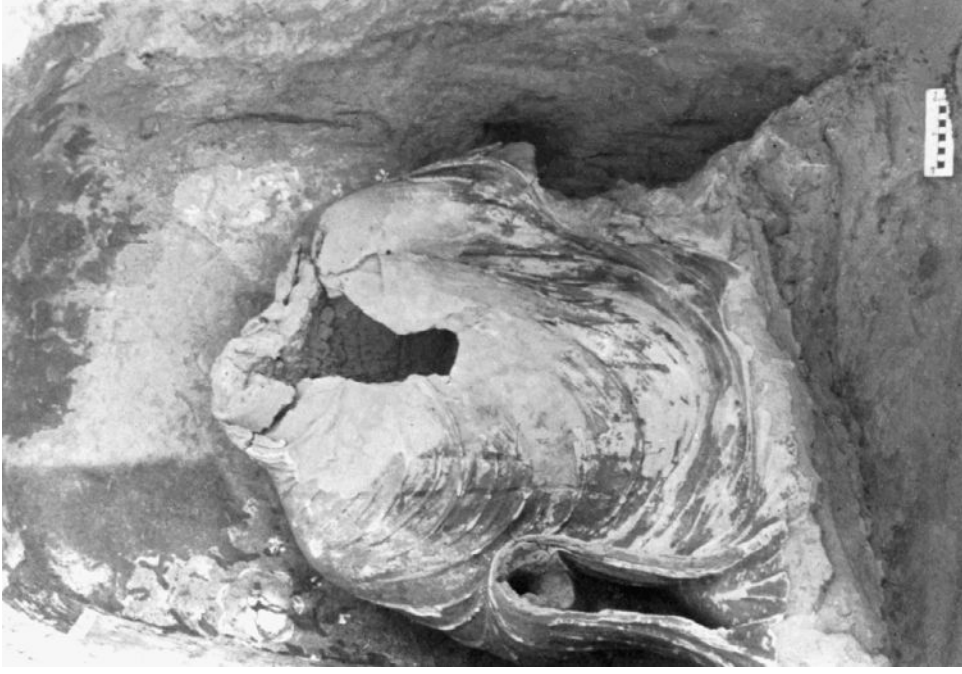


Fig. 8.8d Seated Buddha, niche in the courtyard of Complex D, Karatepe, near Termez, southern Uzbekistan, clay, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.





Fig. 8.8e Standing Buddha, from Chāsada (Haṣṭnagar), Gandhāra, dated year 384 (if Old Śaka era, then ca. 262 A.D.)



Fig. 8.8f Buddha and attendants, Niche B20, Kalawān, Taxila, ca. 300 A.D.





Fig. 8.8g Head of the Buddha of Niche B20 in Fig. 8.8f, Kalawān, Taxila, fired clay

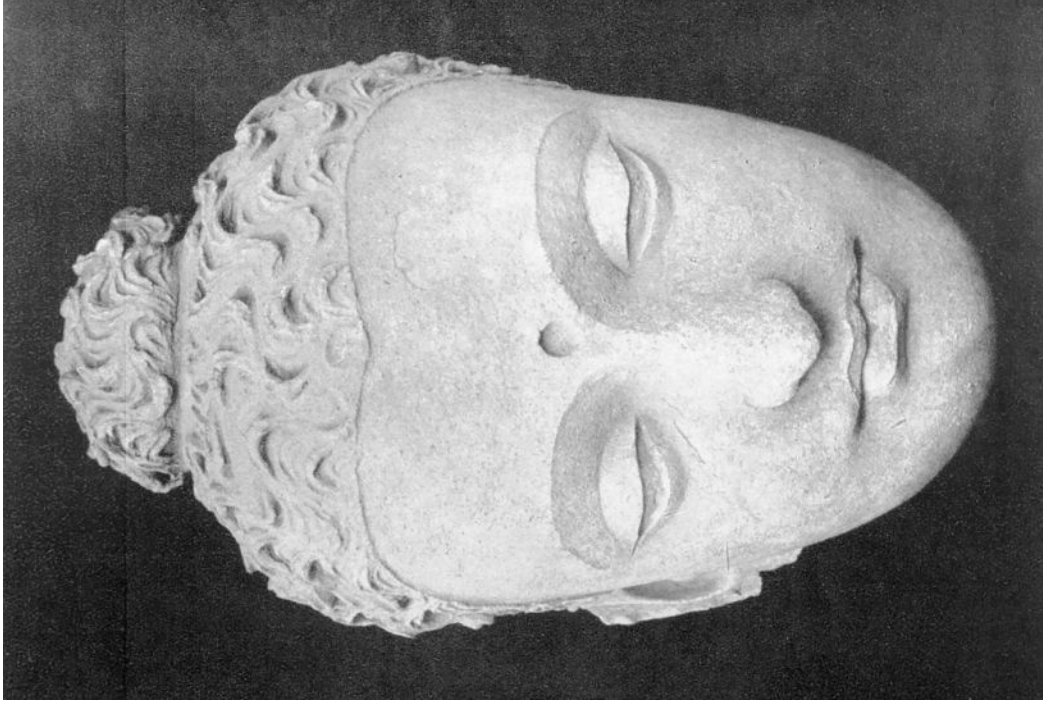


Fig. 8.8h Head of a Buddha, Main Stupa, Jauliān, Taxila, stucco



Fig. 8.8i Buddha torso, Gandhāra, schist, Lahore Museum



Fig. 8.8j Niche S7 with seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā, two standing Buddhas and other figures, at entrance to monastery at Mohrā Morādu, Taxila





Fig. 8.8k Right attendant Bodhisattva from the south wall, "bay V", Mohra Moradu, Taxila



Fig. 8.8l Cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva, bronze, ca. 430's, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art



Fig. 8.8m Torso of colossal Bodhisattva, Gandhāra, schist, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





Fig. 8.8n Standing Buddha, *in situ*, south side of Main Stupa, Mohra Moradu, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.8o Magistrate, from the Baths at Aphrodisias, Istanbul, stone, ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 8.9a Stucco stupa, from Cell 9, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila (1975)



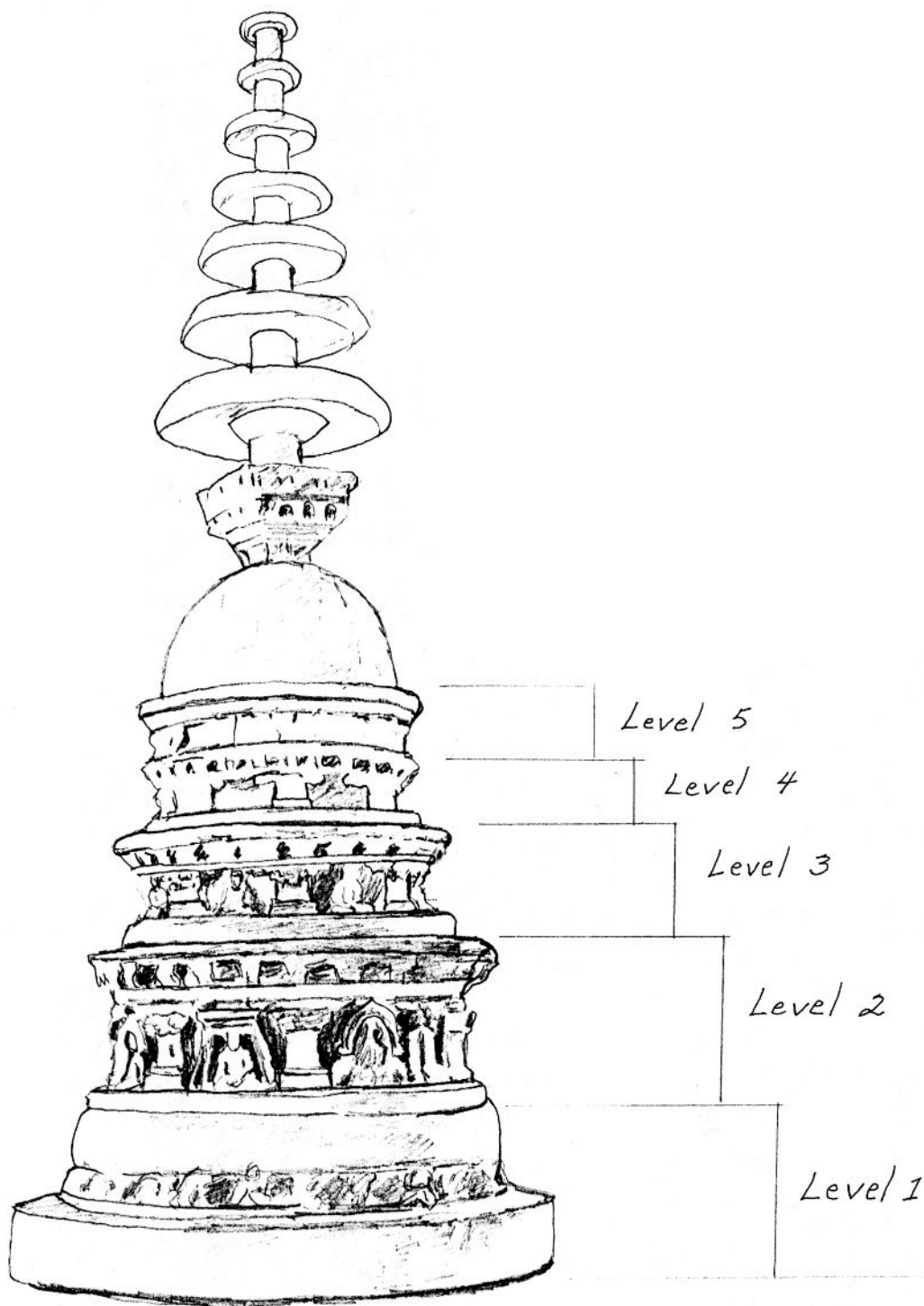


Fig. 8.9b Drawing of the stupa from Cell 9 in Fig. 8.9a



Fig. 8.9c Detail of lower levels with images, stucco stupa from Cell 9, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.9d Stucco stupa from Cell 9, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila

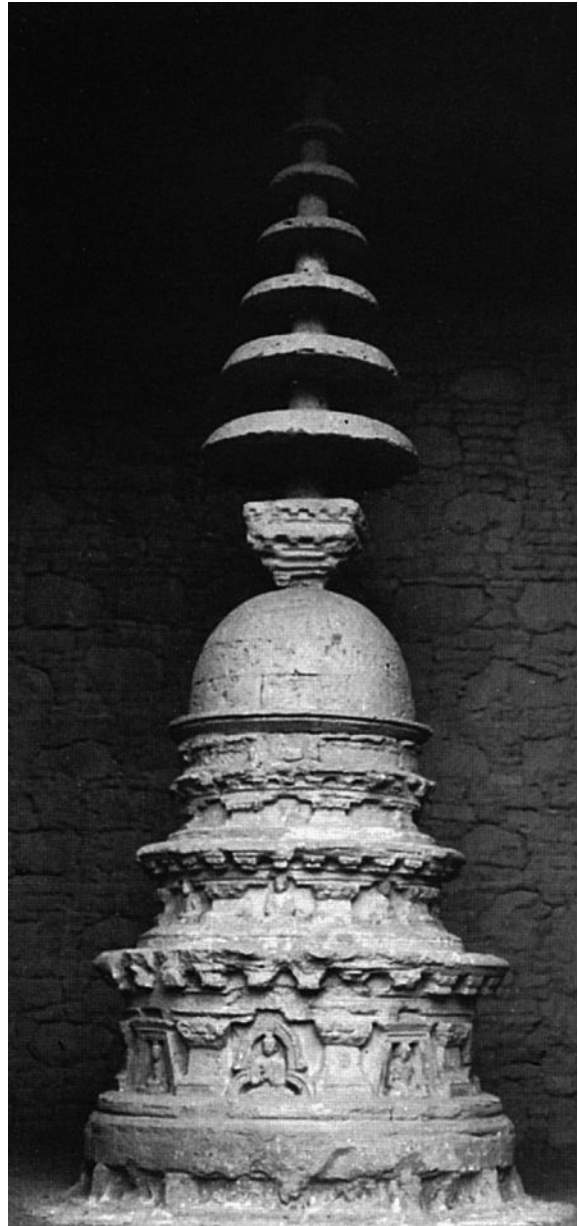


Fig. 8.9e Stucco stupa from Cell 9, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila



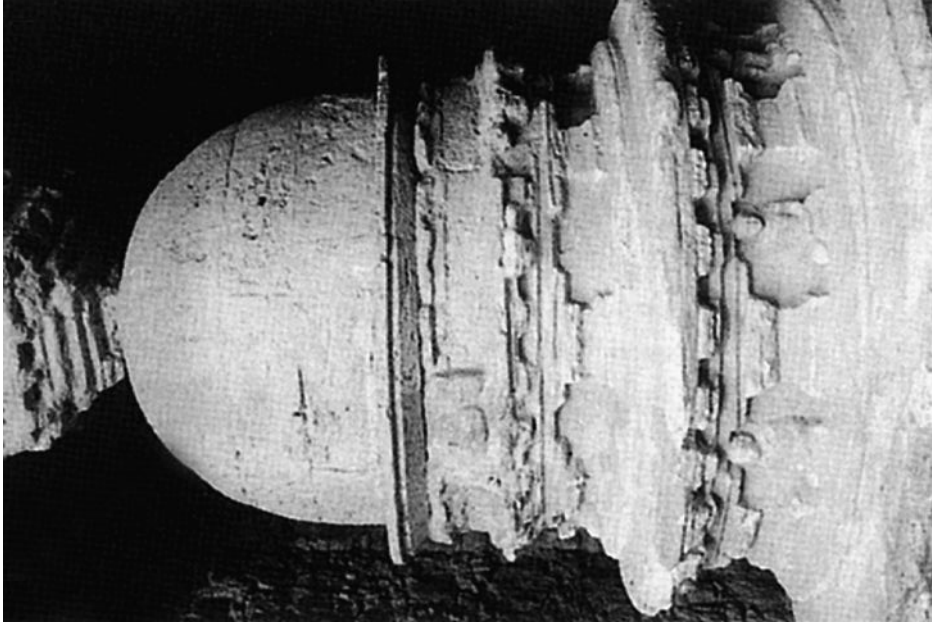


Fig. 8.9f Detail of upper levels, stucco stupa of Cell 9, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila



Fig. 8.9g Stupa H from Pippala monastery, Taxila



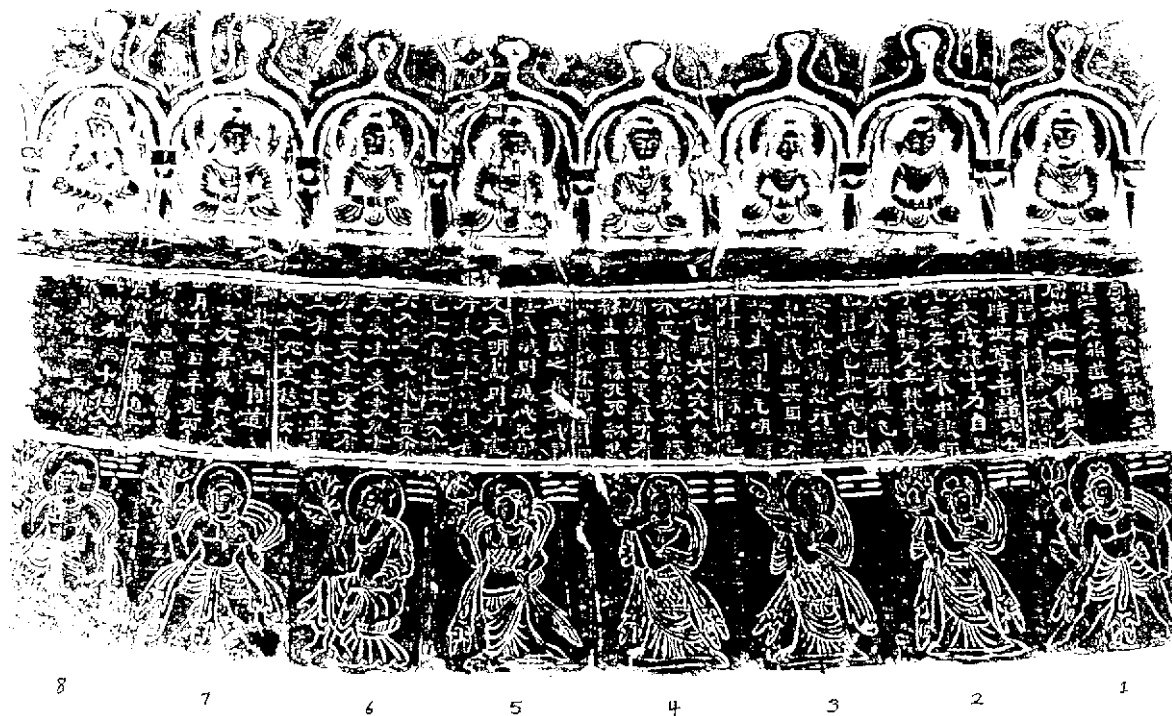


Fig. 8.10a Rubbing of the lower sections of the Kao Shan-mu miniature stone stupa (shih-t'a) from Chiu-ch'üan, Kansu, dated 428 A.D. under the Northern Liang



Fig. 8.10b Drawing of the row of seven Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva from the stone stupa (shih-t'a) of Chi-te, from Tun-huang, Northern Liang dynasty, ca. 426 A.D.



Fig. 8.11a View of subsidiary Stupa A 15 (showing the east and south faces of the plinth with large sculptures), west side of the Main Stupa, Jaulian, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.11b East face of Stupa A 15 showing the three dhyānāsana Buddhas and the Kharoṣṭhī inscription on the platform pedestal, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.11c South face of Stupa A15 with five dhyānāsana Buddhas, Jauliān, Taxila





Fig. 8.11d West face of Stupa A15 with five Buddhas and a standing female donor





Fig. 8.11e Detail of female donor and dharmachakra Buddha on lotus pedestal, south end of the west face, Stupa A15, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.11f Central Buddha, west face, Stupa A15, Jauliān, Taxila

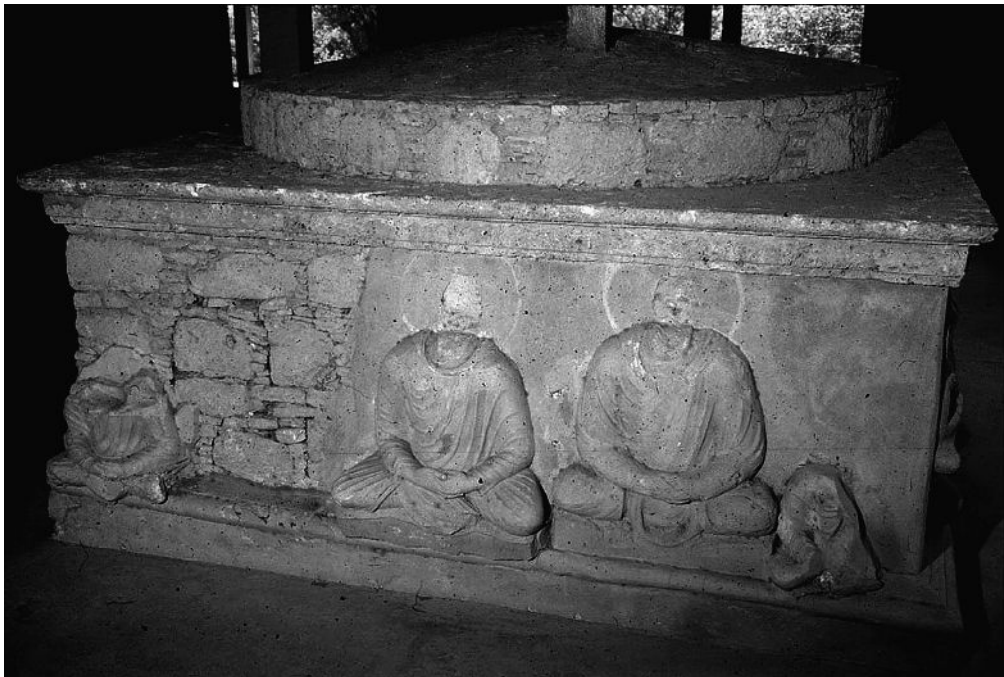


Fig. 8.11g North face of Stupa A15, Jauliān, Taxila



i)



ii)



iii)



iv)



v)



vi)

Fig. 8.11h Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions (i-vi) from Stupa A15, Jauliāñ, Taxila



Fig. 8.11i Remains of central Buddha with Kharoṣṭhī inscription on pedestal, north face, Stupa A15, Jauliān, Taxila



←

Fig. 8.11j Bronze stupa, possibly from Swāt, Karachi Museum





Fig. 8.11k Stele with three Buddhas (including Dipamkara), from Shotorak, Kāpīś, Afghanistan, schist, National Museum, Kabul



↑  
Fig. 8.11m Dhyanāsana Buddha, from mound D, Sahrī-Bahlōl C, schist, Peshawar area, Gandhāra





Fig. 8.11n The Renunciation, from Lōriyān Tāngai, Peshawar area, Gandhāra, schist, Indian Museum, Calcutta

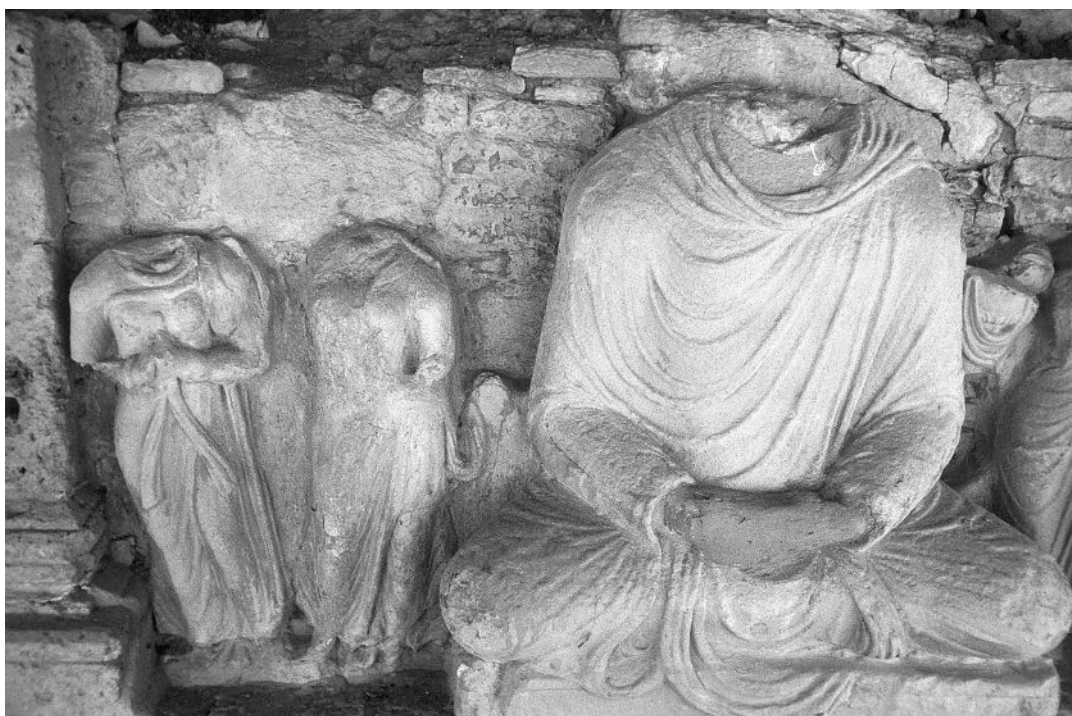


Fig. 8.11o Sculptures on the Main Stupa, Mohrā Morādu, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.12a Maitreya Bodhisattva, east face, Stupa A11, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.12b Sculptures on the east face of Stupa A11, Jauliān, Taxila (1975)





Fig. 8.12c Sculptures on the east face of Stupa A11, Jaulian, Taxila (1975)

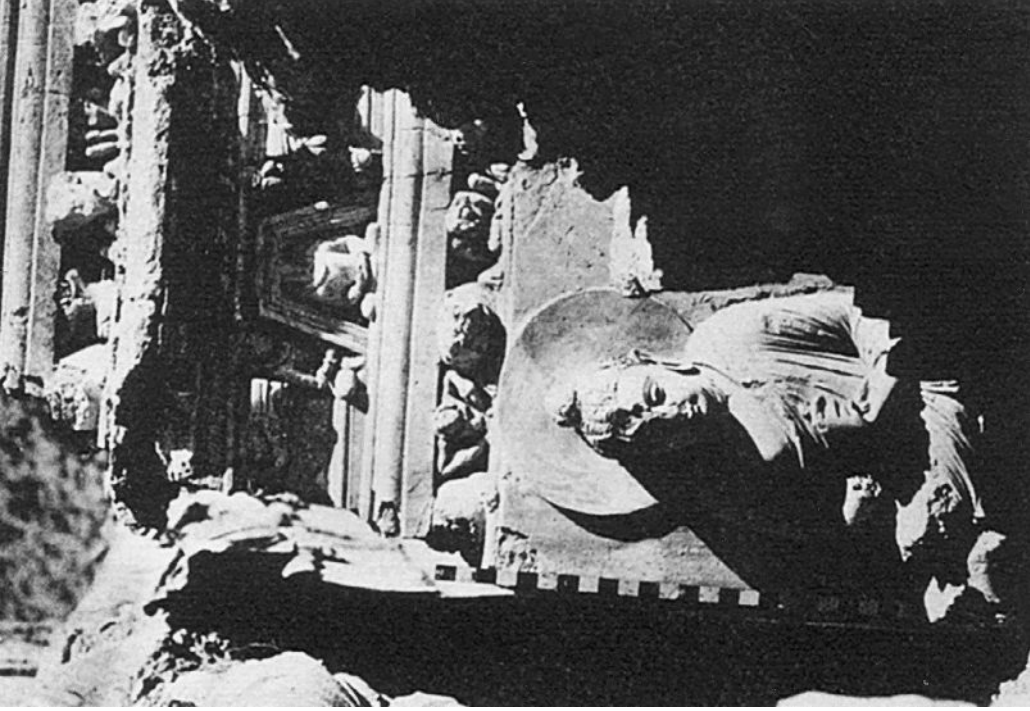


Fig. 8.12d Sculptures on the west face (north end), Stupa A11, Jaulian, Taxila



Fig. 8.12e Buddha in Fig. 8.12d in dharmachakra mudra, west face (north end), Stupa A11, Jaulian, Taxila





Fig. 8.12f Sculptures on the Main Stupa, Mohra Moradu, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.13a Subsidiary stupas in front of the entrance of the Main Stupa, east side of the staircase (northeast corner), Jaulian, Taxila



Fig. 8.13b Subsidiary stupas in front of the entrance of the Main Stupa, west side of the staircase (northwest corner), Jaulian, Taxila



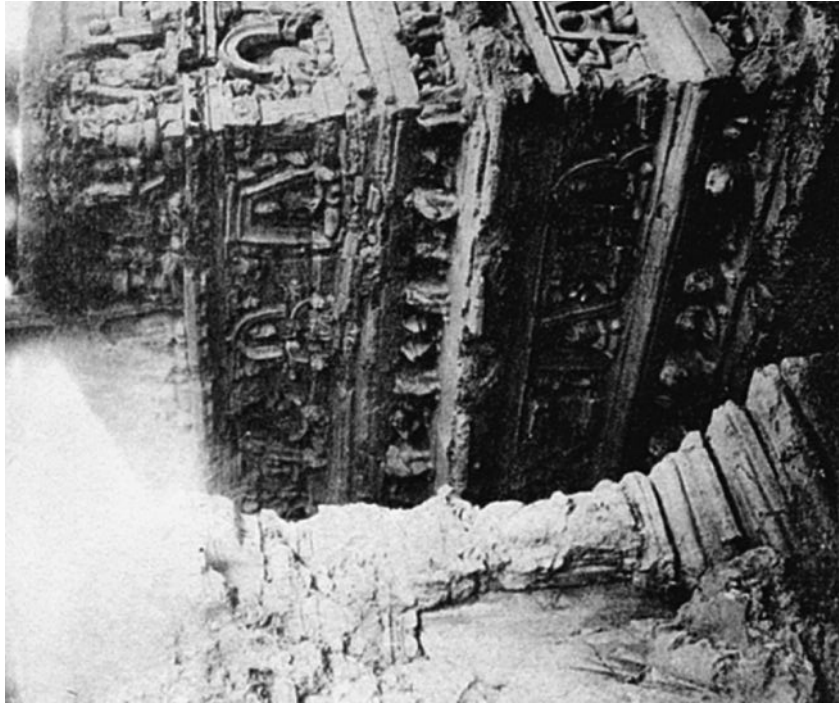


Fig. 8.14a Corner of Stupa D5, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliañ, Taxila



i)



ii)



iii)



Fig. 8.14b Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions on Stupa D5, Jauliañ, Taxila

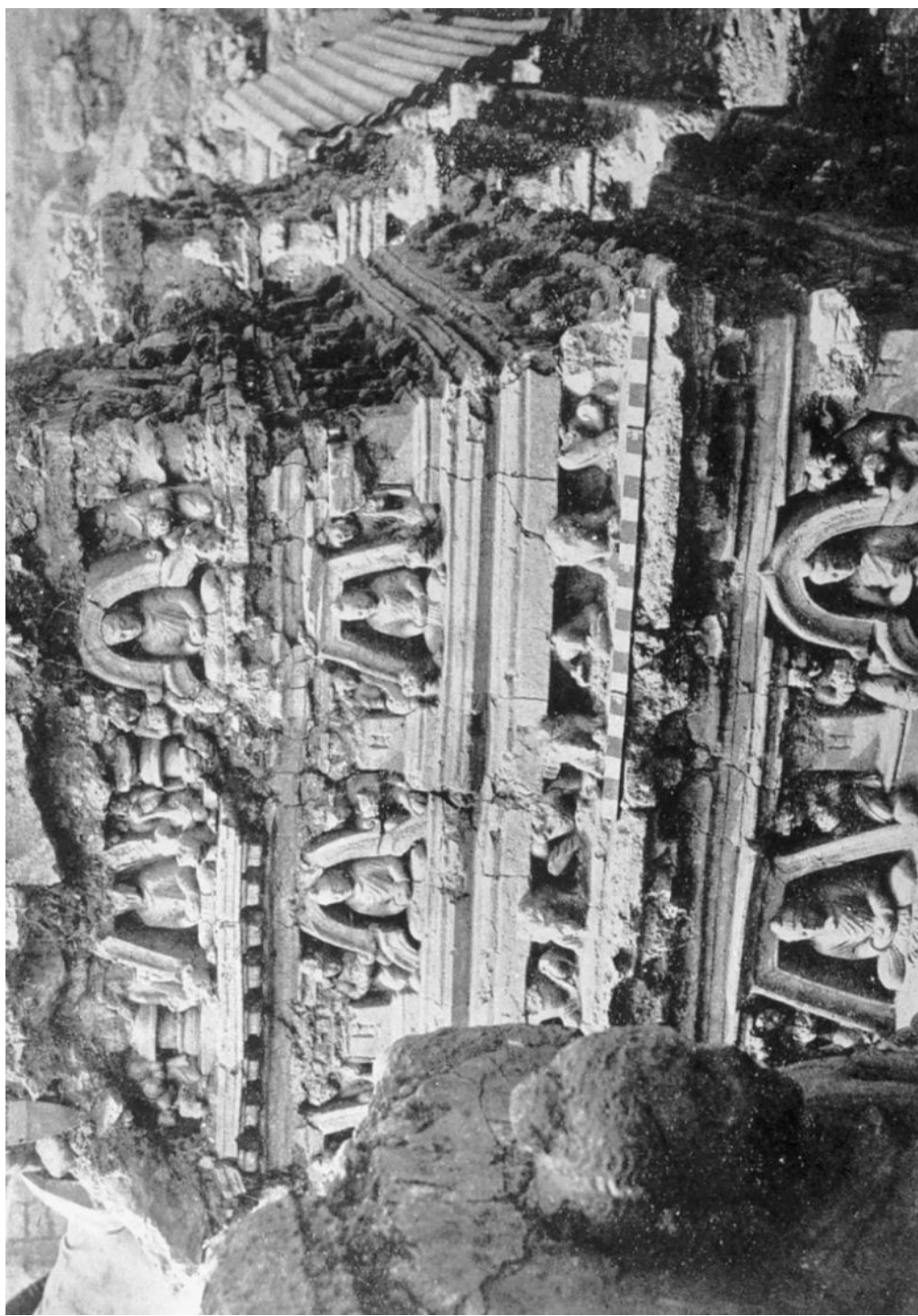


Fig. 8.15 Stupa A16 from the southeast, Main Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila





Fig. 8.16a Stupa D4, from the southeast, Lower Stupa Court, Jaulian, Taxila



Fig. 8.16b Stupa D4, from the northeast (after reconstruction), Lower Stupa Court, Jaulian, Taxila

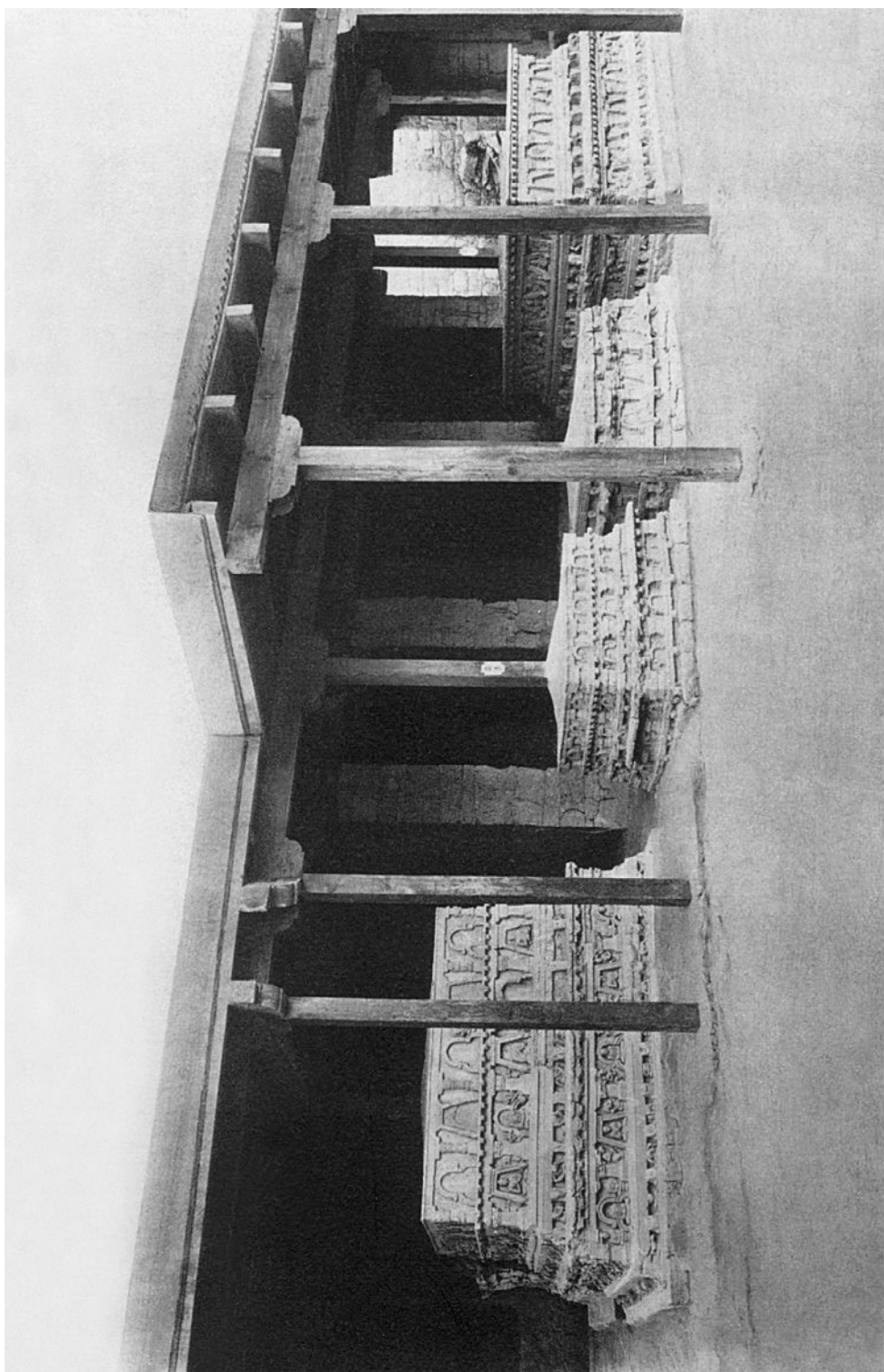




Fig. 8.16c Stupa D4, east side, lower storey (base), left (south) three niches, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.16d Stupa D4, east side, lower level, detail of central niche



D4

D3

D2

D1

Fig. 8.16e Stupas D1 (far right), D2, D3 and D4, Lower Stupa Court, Jaulian, Taxila, after restoration with protection structure, taken from the northeast





Fig. 8.16f Detail of the central niche, north face, lower level, Stupa D4, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.17a Stupa D1, west face, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila



Fig. 8.17b Stupa D1, west face, lower level (north end), Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.17c Detail of Buddha niche at north end, lower level, west face, Stupa D1, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila (1975)





Fig. 8.17d Stupa D1, west face, second level, image niches, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila, stucco (1975)



Fig. 8.17e Detail of Maitreya Bodhisattva, west face, second level, Stupa D1, Lower Stupa Court, Jauliān, Taxila (1975)



Fig. 8.17f Miniature stone stupa (shih-t'a) of Pai, dated 434 A.D. under the Northern Liang

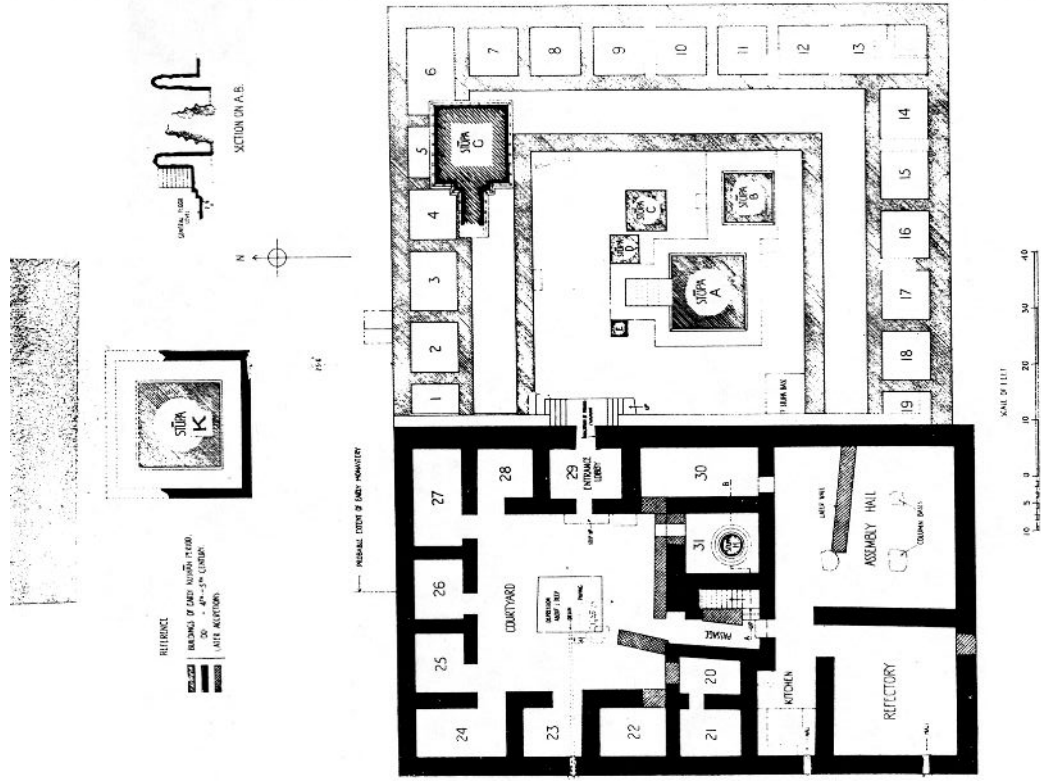


Fig. 8.18a Plan of Pippala monastery, Taxila





Fig. 8.18b Stucco reliefs on the lower level (central and right bay niches), south face, Stupa K, Pippala monastery, Taxila

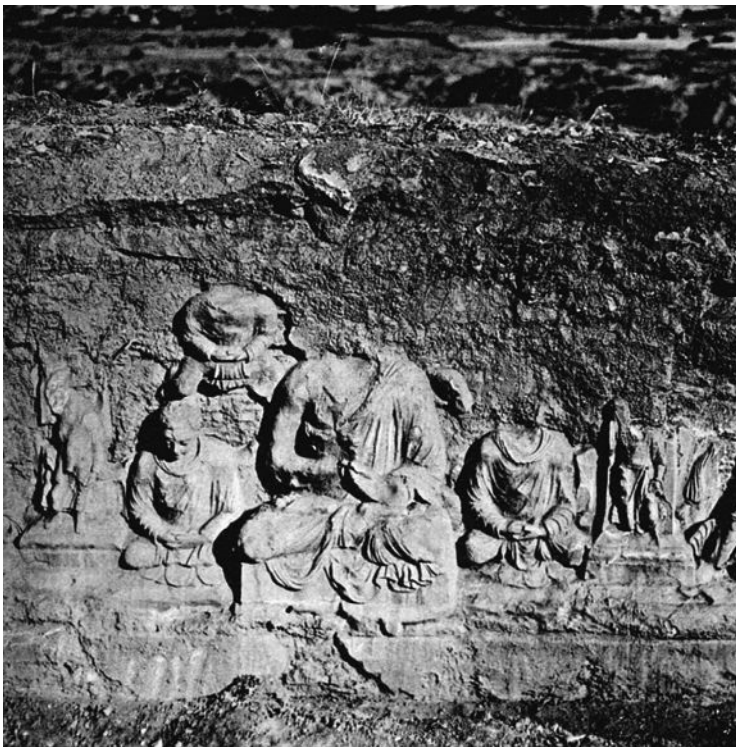


Fig. 8.18c Detail of stucco reliefs in the central bay, lower level, south face, Stupa K, Pippala Monastery, Taxila

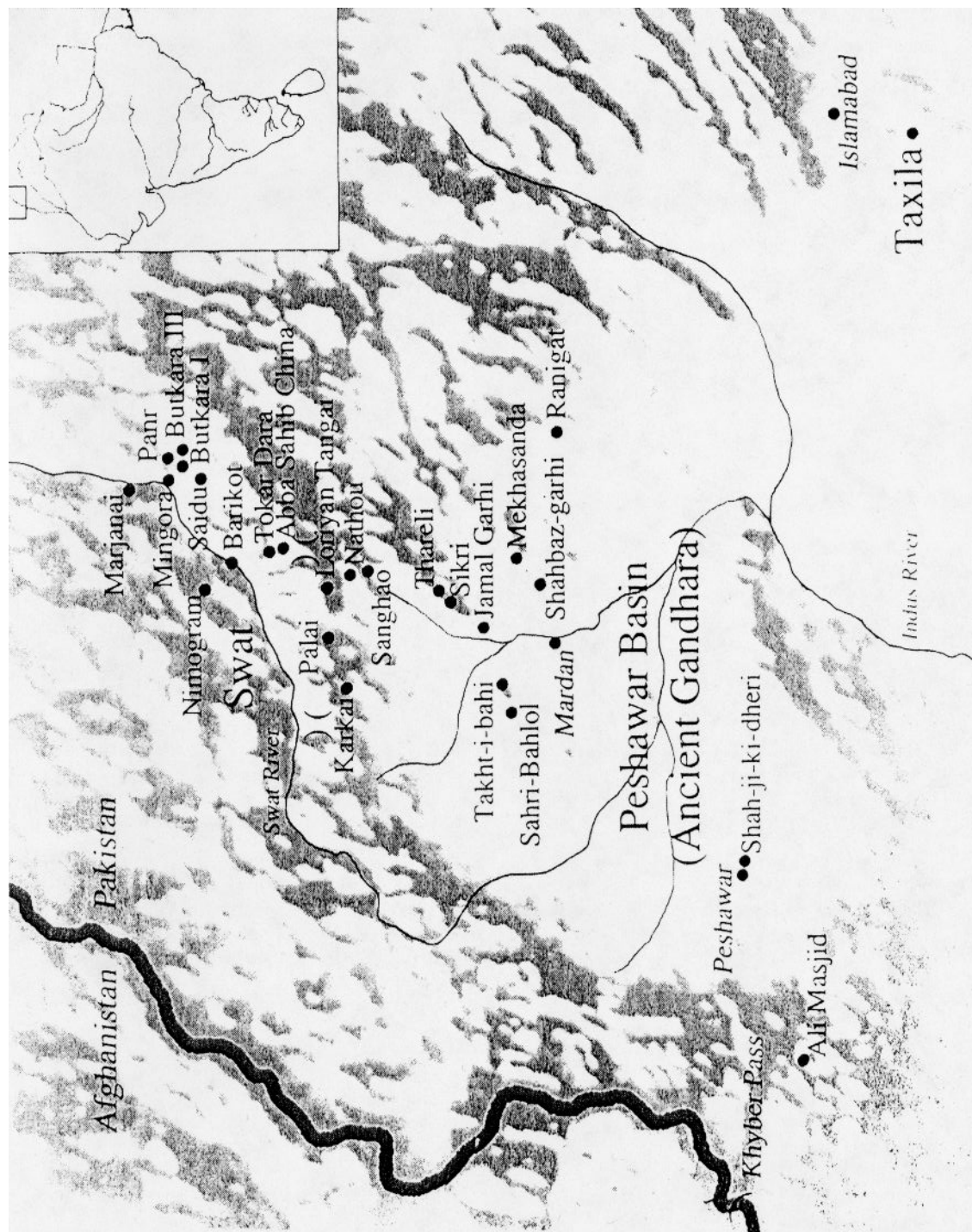
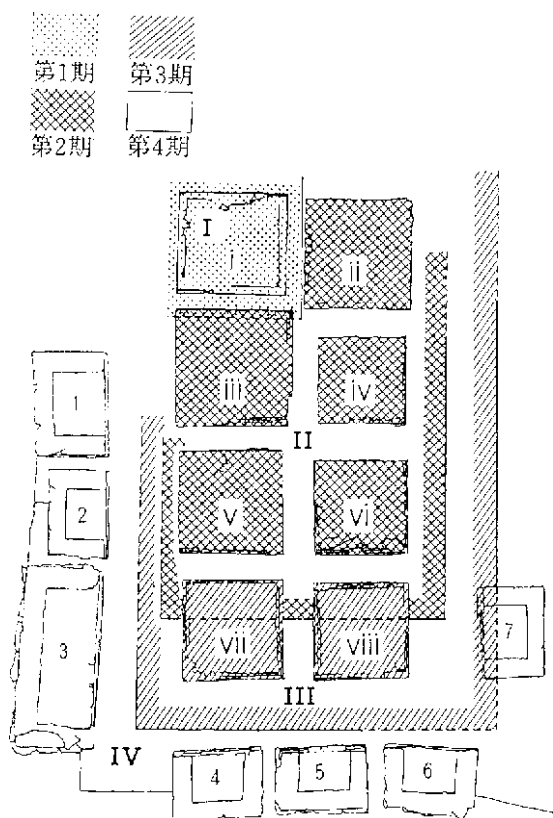


Fig. 8.19 Map of the Peshawar area, ancient Gandhara





Fig. 8.20a Stupa Court C106, Thareli monastery,  
Peshāwar area, Gandhāra



←  
Fig. 8.20b Plan of Stupa Court C106 showing  
stages of construction, Thareli, Peshāwar area,  
Gandhāra







Fig. 8.2.1b View of Takht-i-Bahi monastery site from the south (1975)

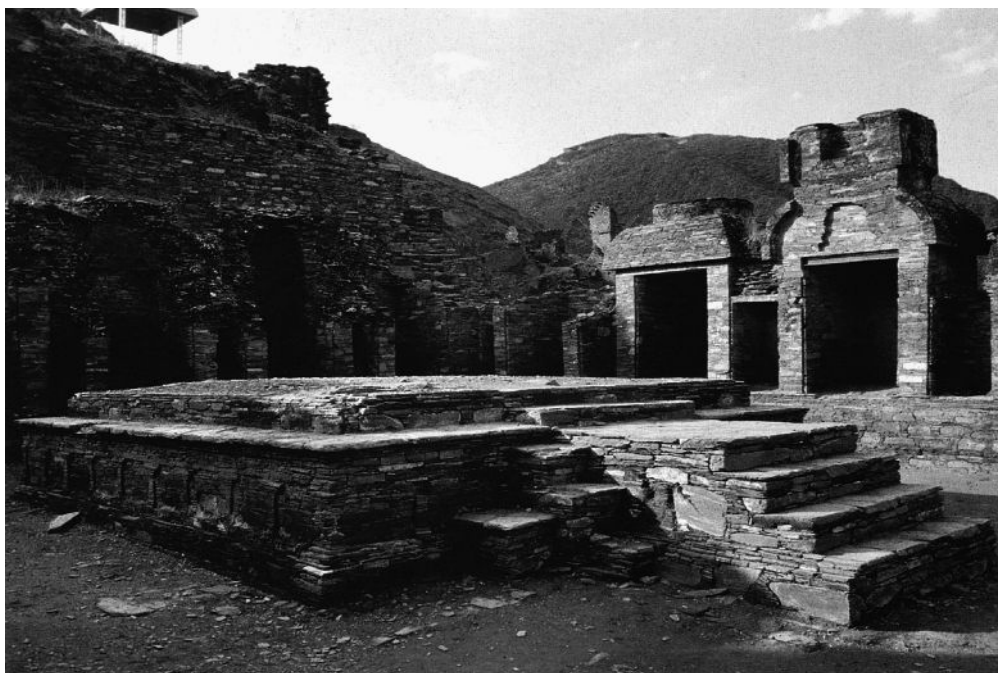


Fig. 8.21c View of South Stupa Court X, from the northeast, Takht-i-Bāhi

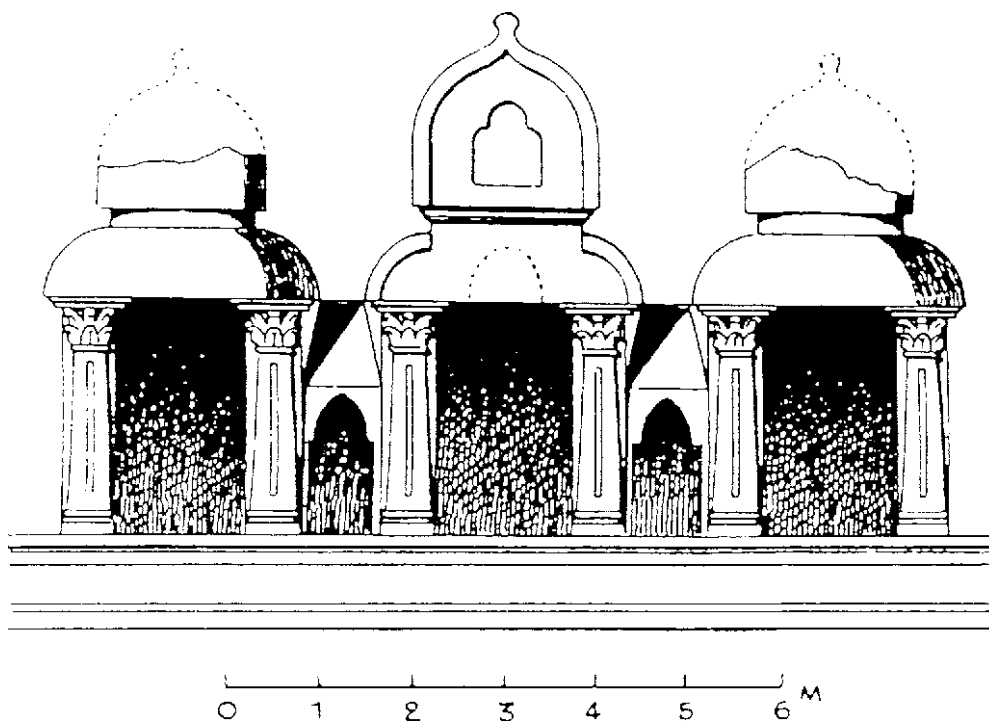


Fig. 8.21d Conjectural drawing of the shrines of the South Stupa Court X, Takht-i-Bāhi



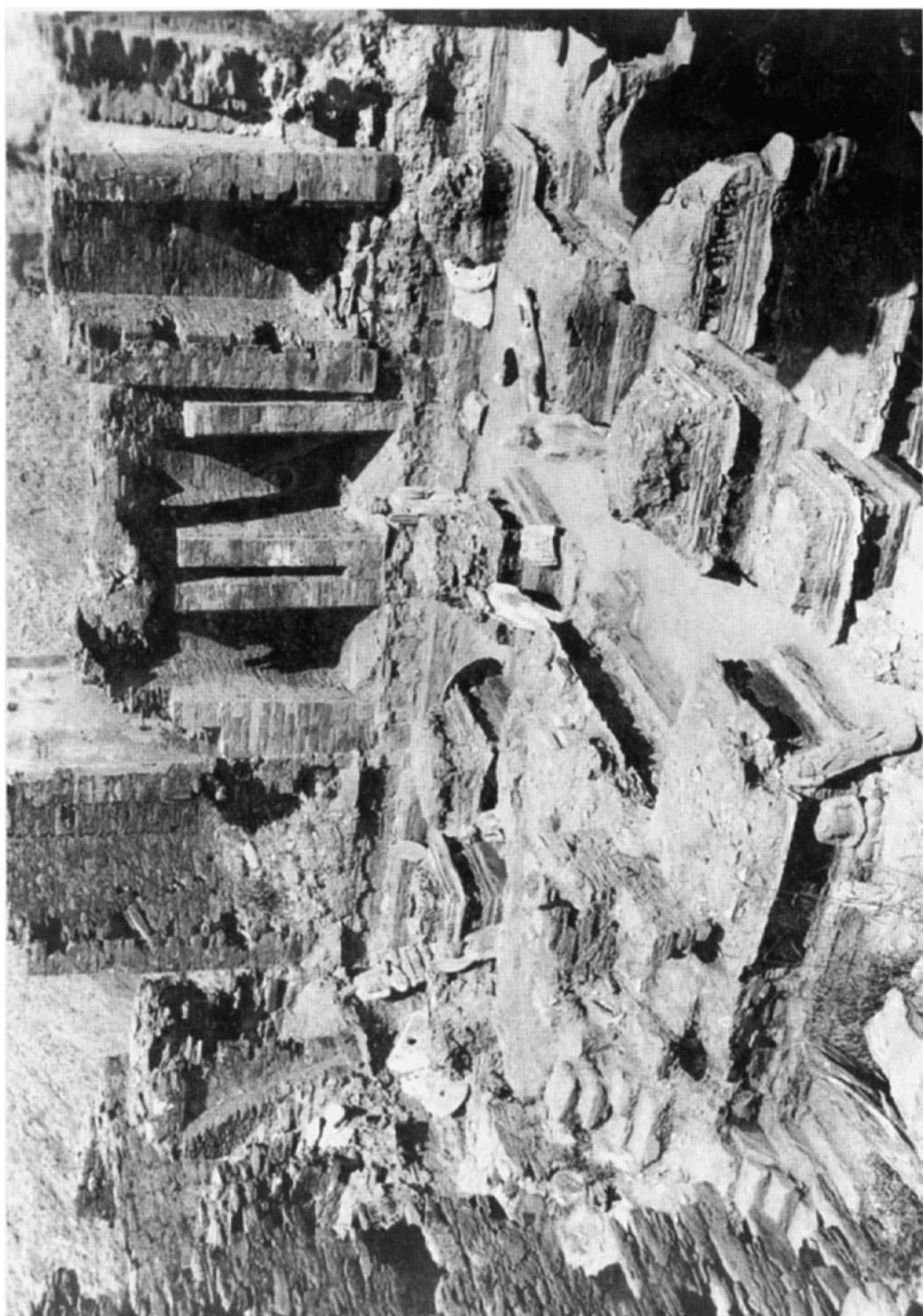


Fig. 8.21e Lower Stupa Court, view to the east showing ruined shrines, Takht-i-Bahi



Fig. 8.21f Shrines M3, M2 and M1, Lower Stupa Court, south wall (east of staircase), Takht-i-Bahī (1975)





Fig. 8.21g Shrines M3, M2 and M1 and smaller shrines M24, M23, M22, Lower Stupa Court, Takht-i-Bahi

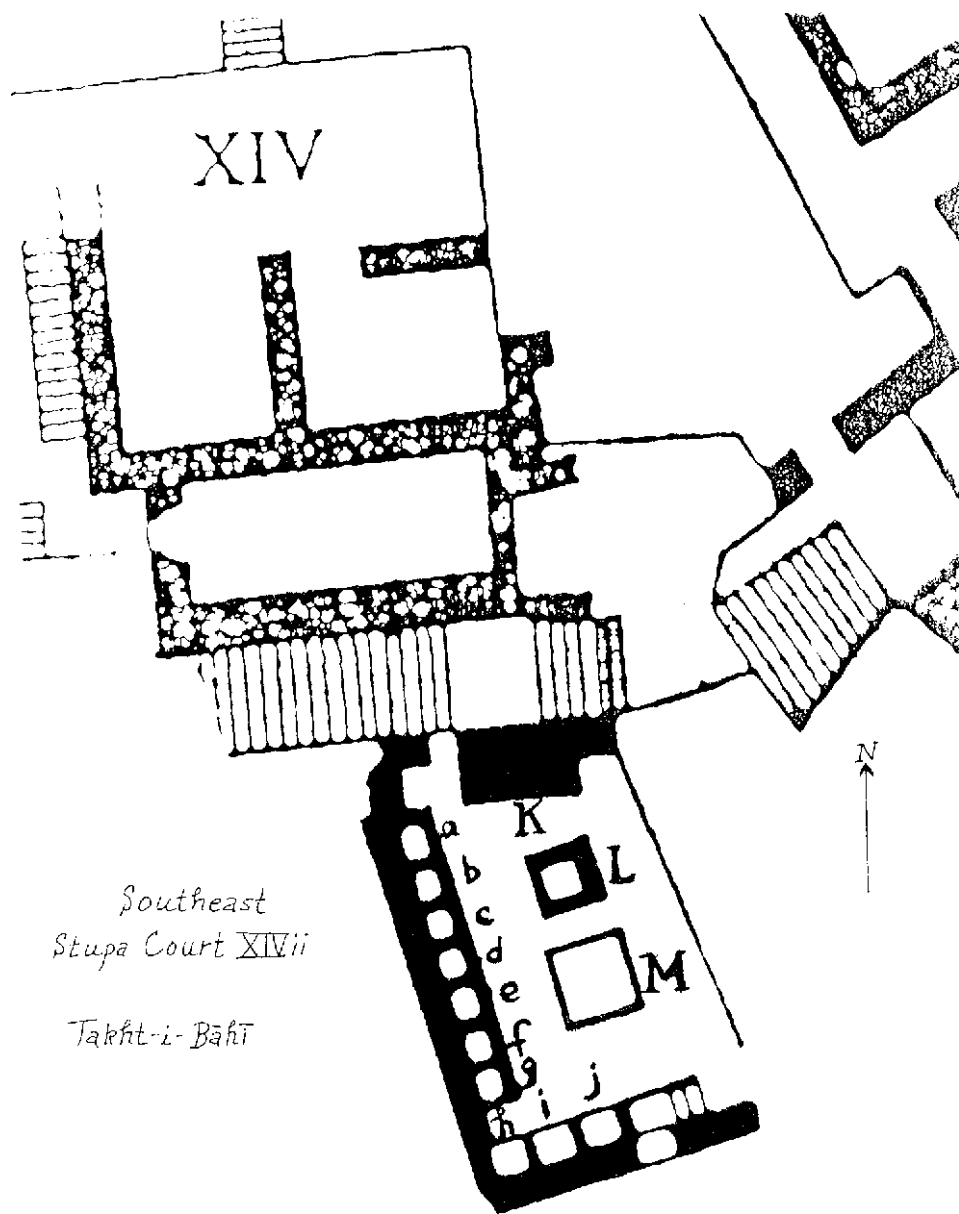


Fig. 8.22a Plan of Southeast Stupa Court XIVii, Takht-i-Bahī

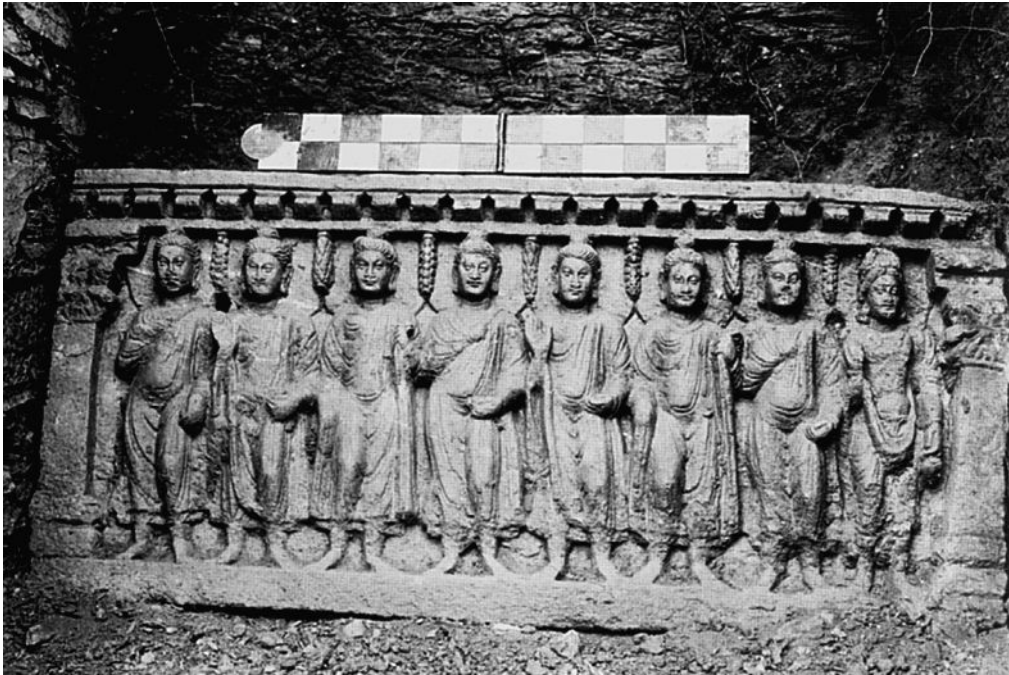


Fig. 8.22b Row of seven standing Buddhas and Maitreya Bodhisattva, relief on the base platform for an image, *in situ*, shrine “c”, Southeast Stupa Court XIVii, Takht-i-Bahi, ca. first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



Fig. 8.22c Row of five seated Buddhas, relief on the base platform for an image, *in situ*, shrine “d”, Southeast Stupa Court XIVii, Takht-i-Bahi



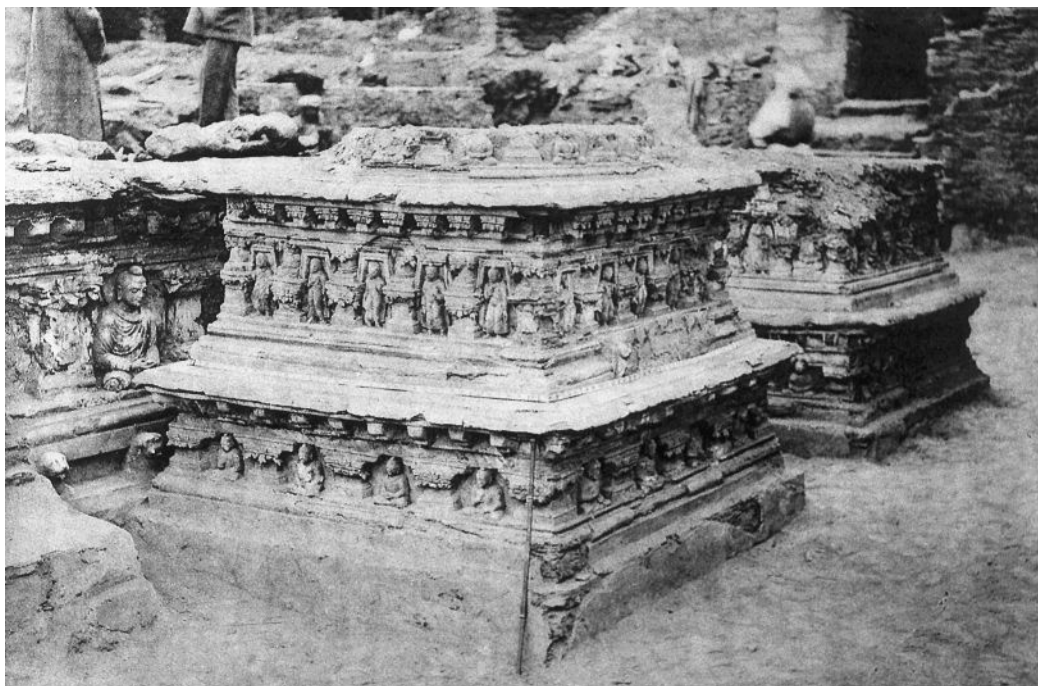


Fig. 8.23a Stupa P37, Court XX, Takht-i-Bāhī, Peshāwar area, Gandhāra

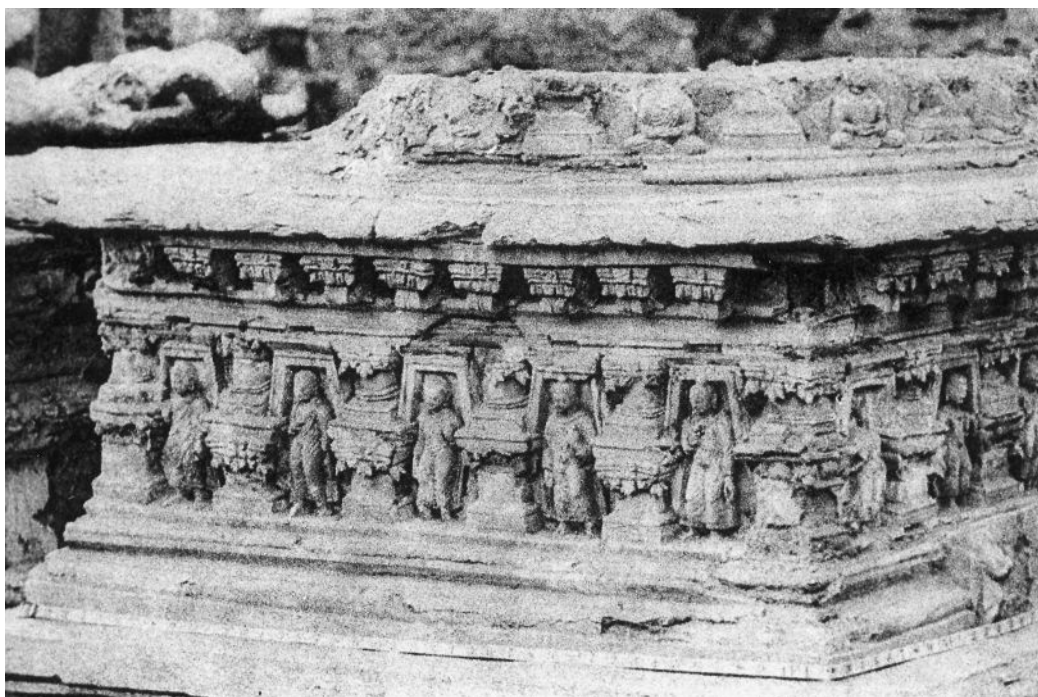


Fig. 8.23b Detail of Fig. 8.23a





Fig. 8.23c Stupa P37, Court XX, Takht-i-Bahī, after restoration



Fig. 8.23d Detail of central niche with Pañcika and Goddess with cornucopia, Stupa P36, Court XX, Takht-i-Bahī



Fig. 8.23e View of the south wall of Court XX showing the remains of four colossal standing Buddhas, Takht-i-Bahi



Fig. 8.23f Close view of the wall with the four colossal Buddhas and two fallen Buddha heads, Court XX, Takht-i-Bahi





Fig. 8.23g Colossal stucco Buddha head from Court XX (seen *in situ* in Fig. 8.23f at far left), now Peshāwar Museum

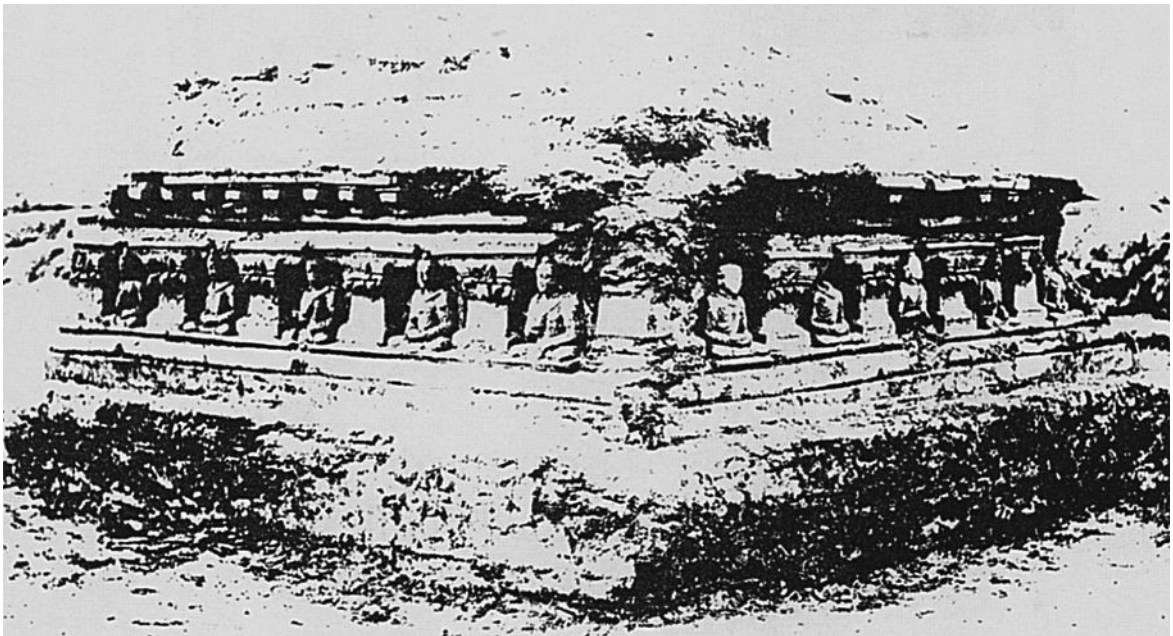


Fig. 8.24 Stupa remains with stucco reliefs of five Buddhas on each side, Sahrī-Bahlōl Site B, Peshāwar area, Gandhāra

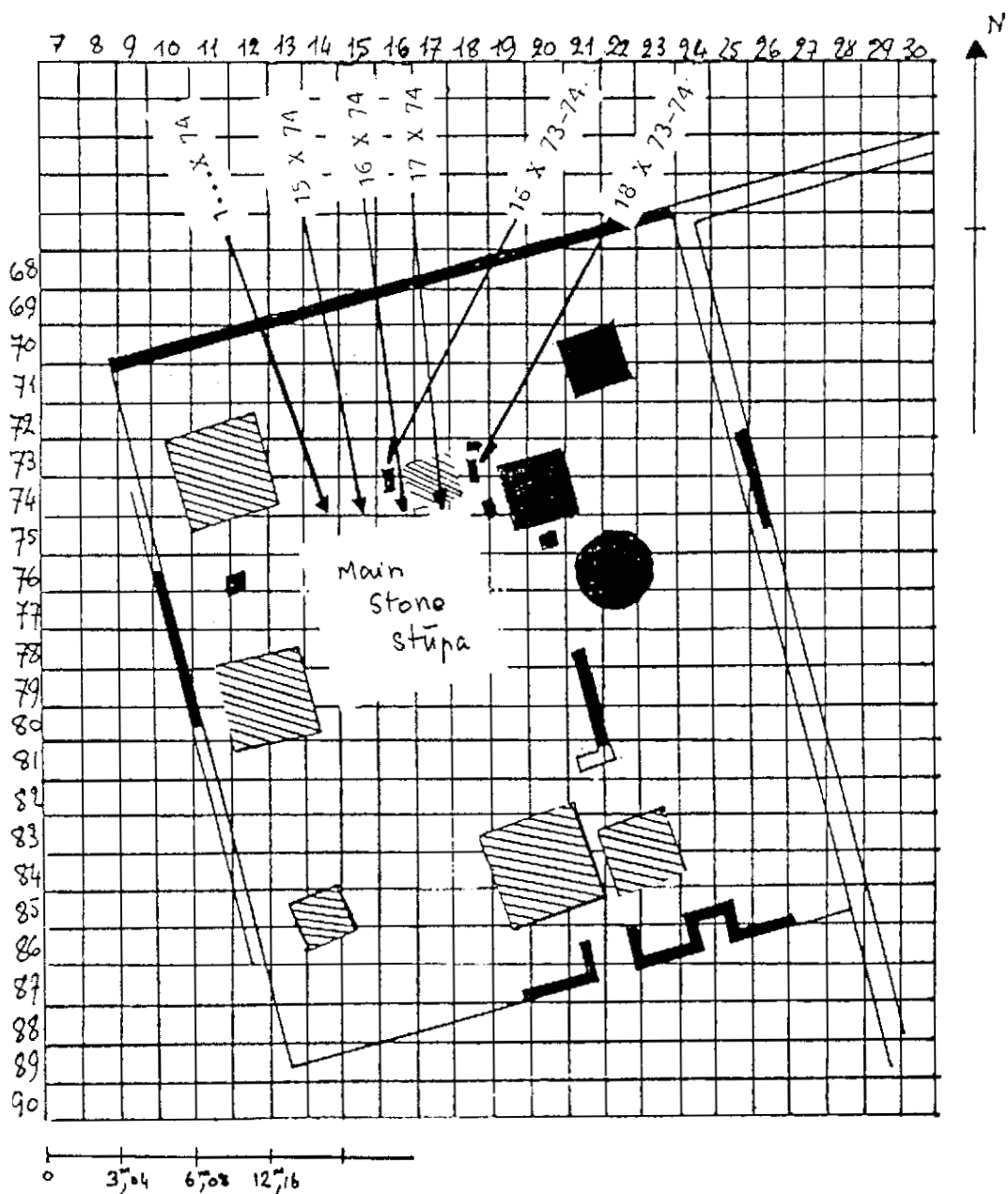


Fig. 8.25a The Moolchand plan (with Tissot's proposed restoration additions) of the "main stone stupa", Sahri-Bahlol Site B





Fig. 8.25b Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudrā (no. 1436), “main stone stupa”, Sahrī-Bahlōl Site B, now Peshāwar Museum

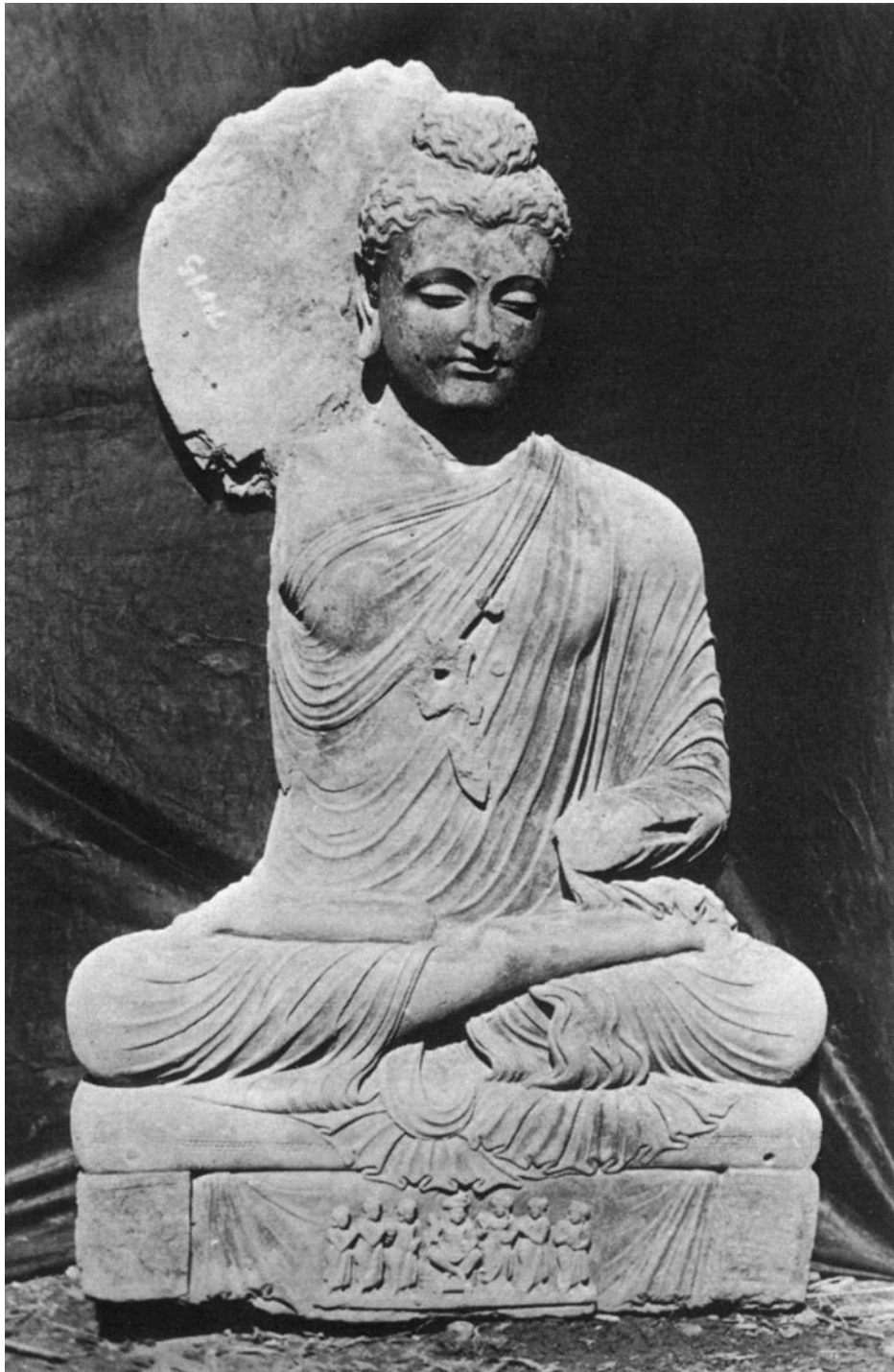


Fig. 8.25c Seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā (no. 1434), “main stone stupa”, Sahri-Bahlol Site B, now Peshāwar Museum

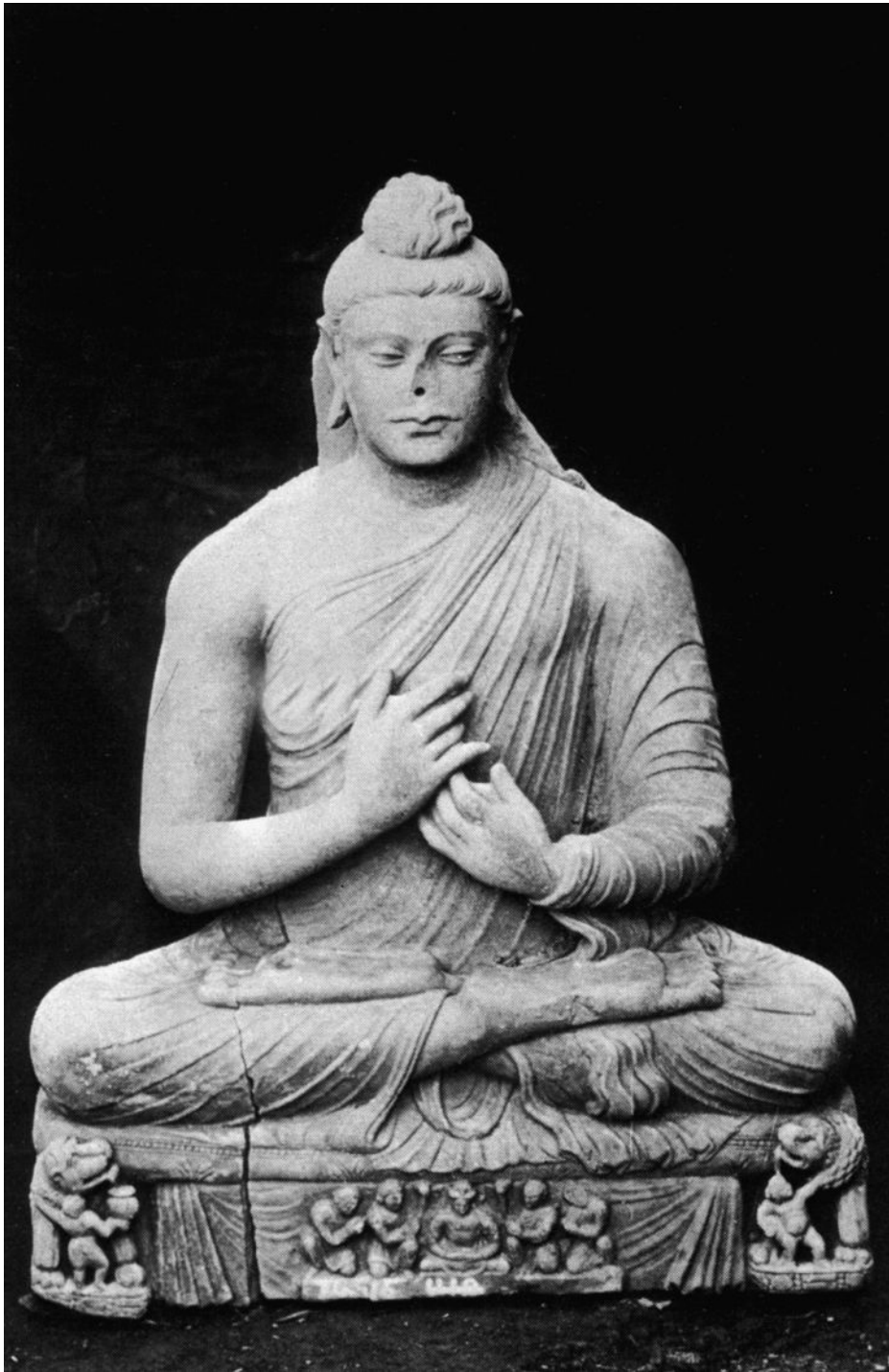


Fig. 8.25d Seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudra, "main stone stupa", Sahri-Bahlol Site B, now National Museum, Karachi, Pakistan



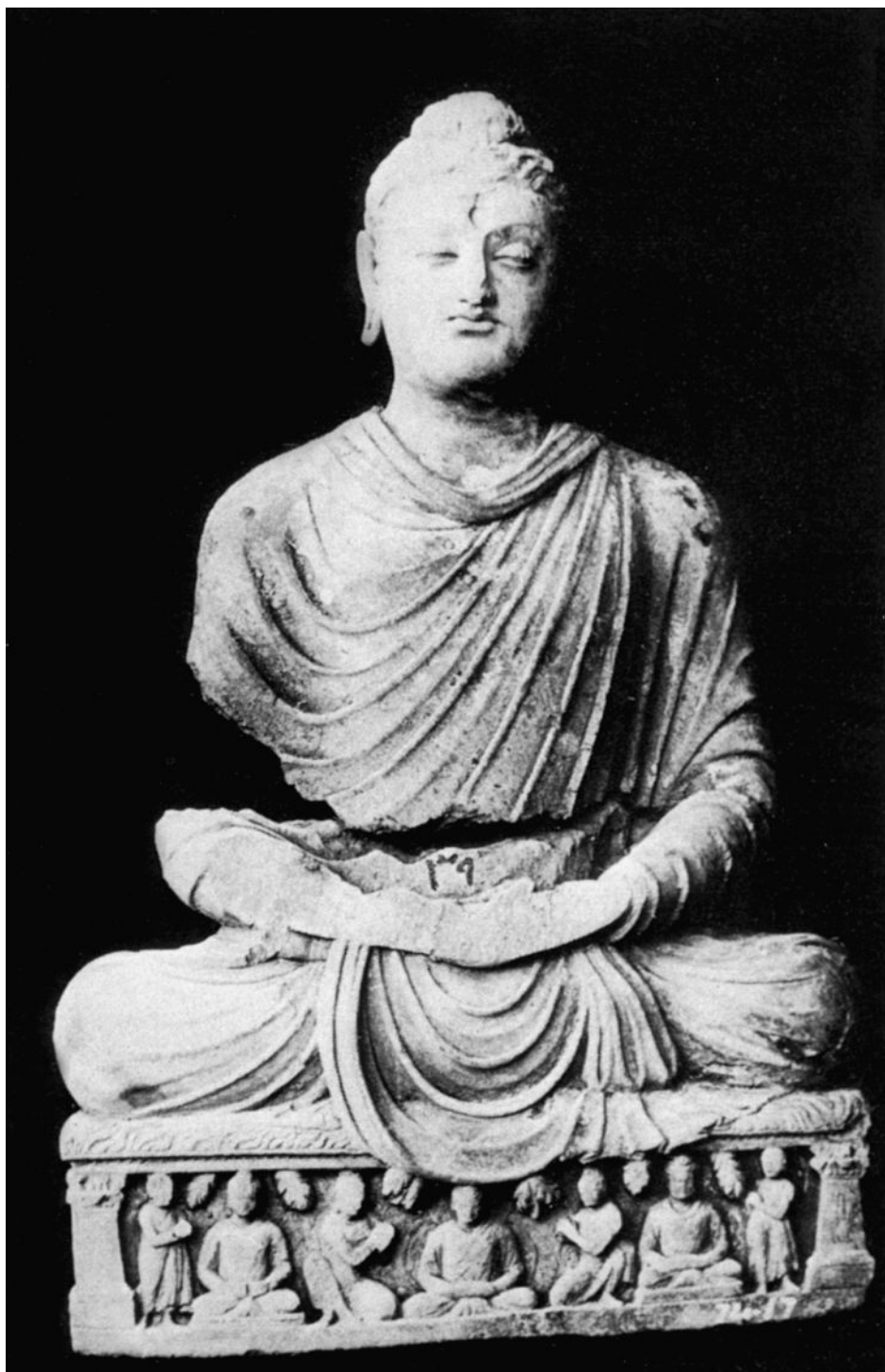


Fig. 8.25e Seated Buddha in dhyāna mudra, “main stone stupa”, Sahri-Bahlol Site B





Fig. 8.25f Detail of seated Buddha in Fig. 8.25b, Peshawar Museum



Fig. 8.25g View of seated Buddha in Fig. 8.25c, Peshawar Museum



Fig. 8.25h Seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudra (possibly Kāśyapa Buddha), from Sahri Bahlol Site B



Fig. 8.25i Seated Buddha in dhyanā mudra (possibly Śākyamuni) from Takht-i-Bahī, now Peshawar Museum





Fig. 8.25j Pedestal of seated Buddha, Gandhāra, schist, Peshāwar Museum



←

Fig. 8.25k Buddha in Fig. 8.25c (possibly Kanakamuni Buddha) from the “main stone stupa”, Sahrī-Bahlōl Site B, now Peshāwar Museum (same as Fig. 8.25c)



Fig. 8.25m Seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā (possibly Kāśyapa Buddha), schist, Peshāwar Museum



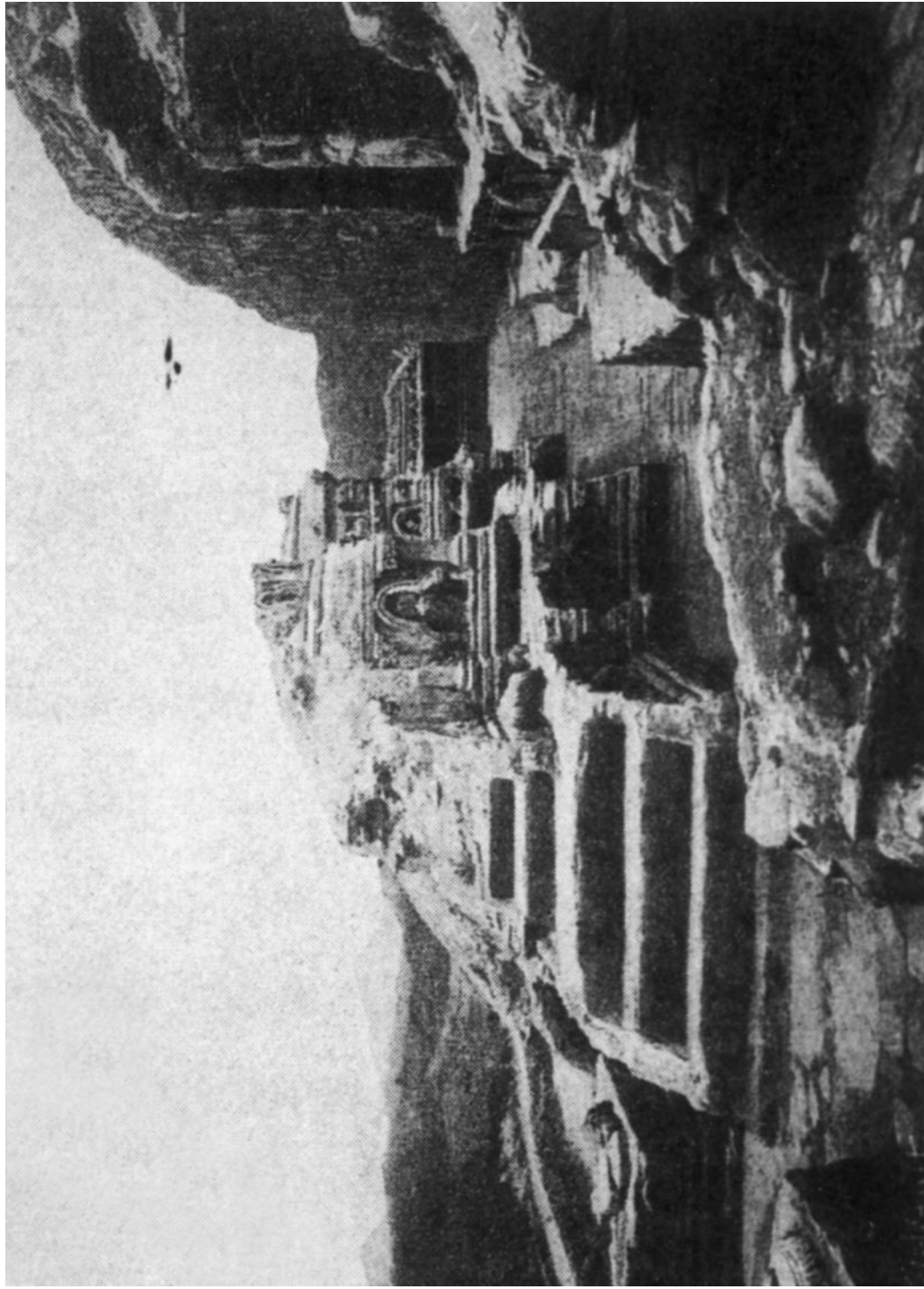


Fig. 8.26a Stupa No. 6 (in center-left foreground) and larger "Medium-sized Stupa" (seen behind Stupa No. 6), Ali Masjid, Khyber Pass, Peshawar area, Gandhara



Fig. 8.26b Left side of "Medium-sized Stupa" (with view of right wall of Stupa No. 6 behind), Ali Masjid, Khyber Pass





Fig. 8.26c View of left side of staircase and corner of front and left side of "Medium-sized Stupa", Ali Masjid, Khyber Pass



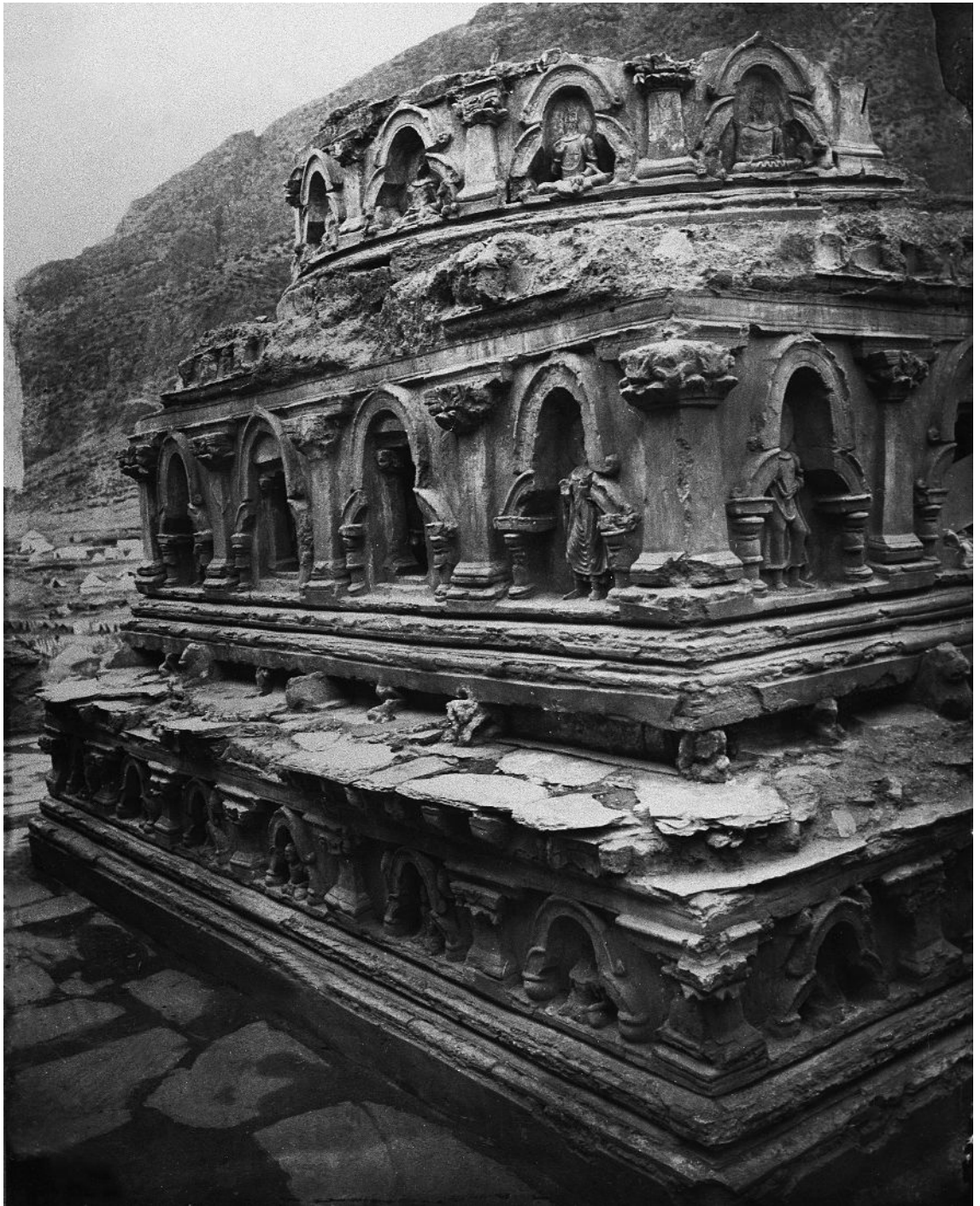


Fig. 8.26d Stūpa No. 6 showing right side and part of rear wall, Ali Masjid, Khyber Pass



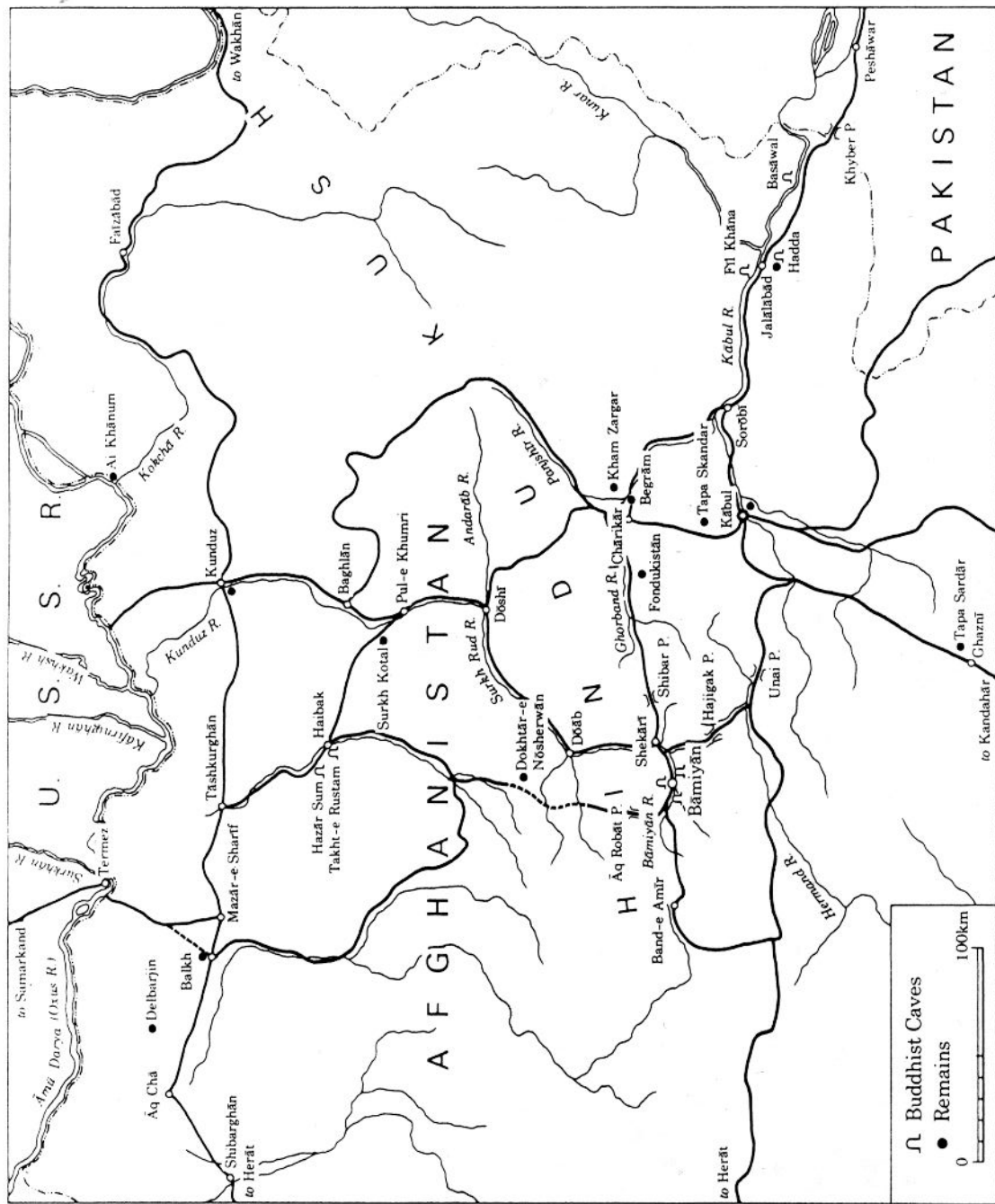


Fig. 8.27 Map of Afghanistan

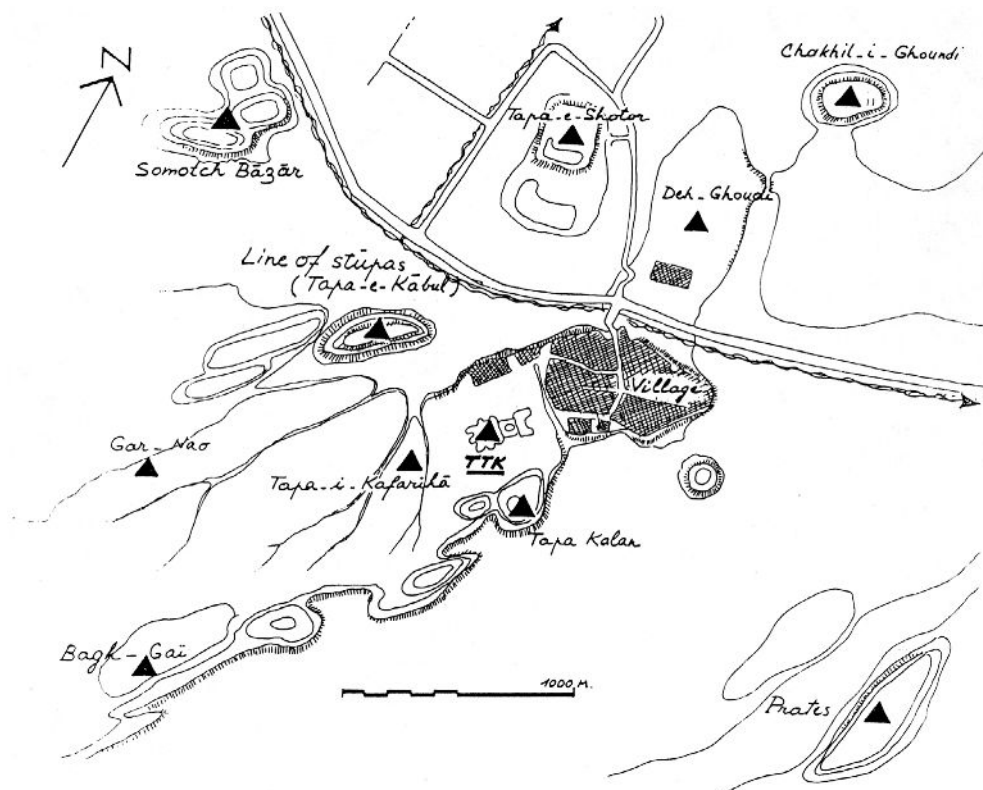


Fig. 8.28 Haḍḍa site map



Fig. 8.29a View of the site of Top-e-Kalan, Tapa-e-Top-e-Kalan (TTK), Haḍḍa, Afghanistan, ancient Gandhāra

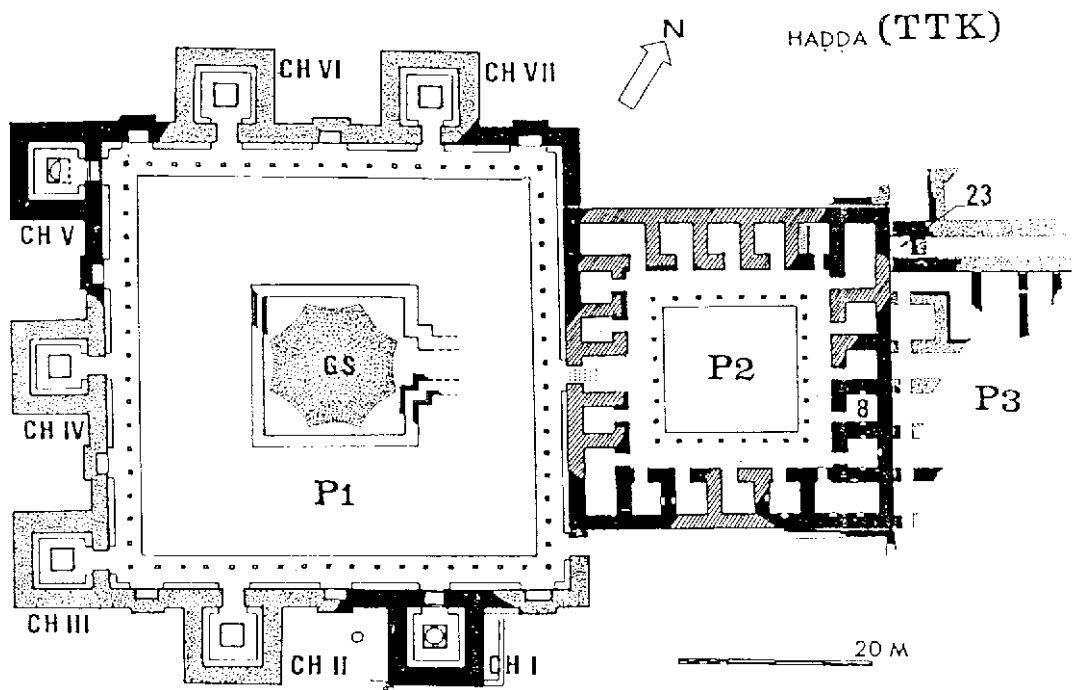
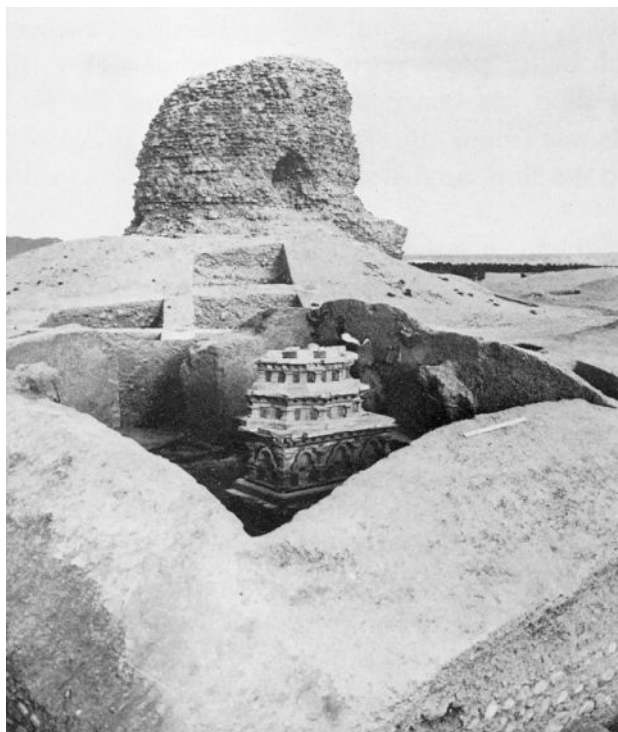


Fig. 8.29b Plan of Tapa-e-Top-e-Kalān (TTK) showing excavation sequence, Haḍḍa



→  
Fig. 8.29c Stupa of Chapel V (perhaps stupa of Kanakamuni) in the foreground with the Great Stupa Top-e-Kalān behind, TTK, Haḍḍa





Fig. 8.29d Pilaster and stucco images, southwest side of the podium of the Great Stupa, TTK, Hadda



Fig. 8.29e Stucco image, northeast wall of podium, Great Stupa, TTK, Hadda





Fig. 8.29f Stupa of Chapel 1 (CH 1) (perhaps stupa of Vipassīn), Great Stupa, TTK, Haḍḍa

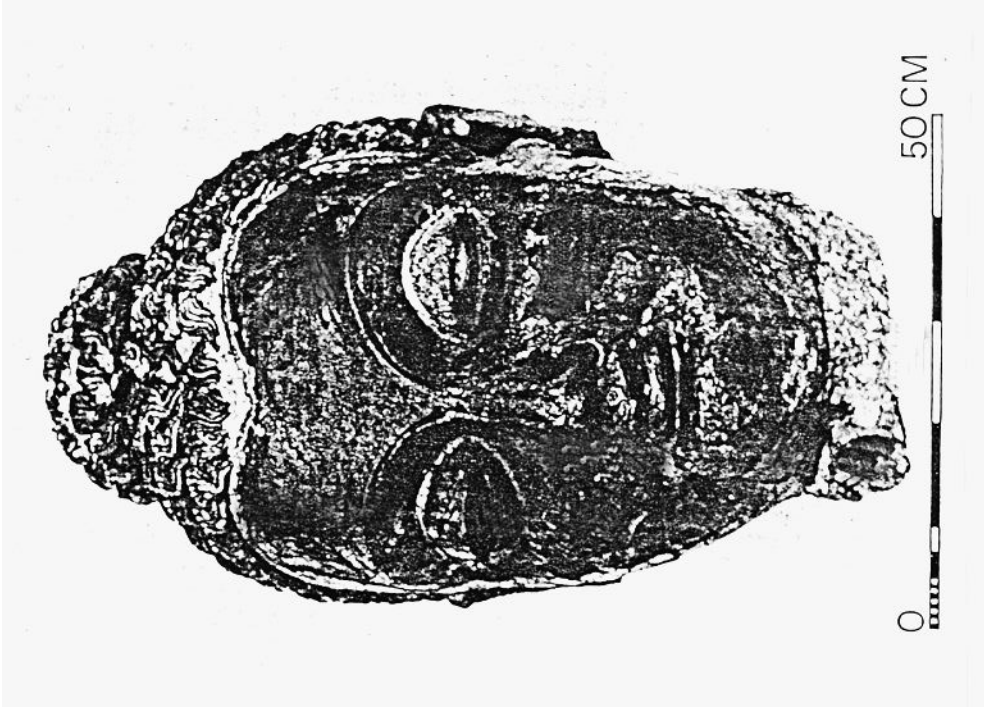


Fig. 8.29g Head of a colossal standing Buddha from the platform surrounding Chapel 1 (CH 1), Great Stupa, TTK, Haḍḍa, clay

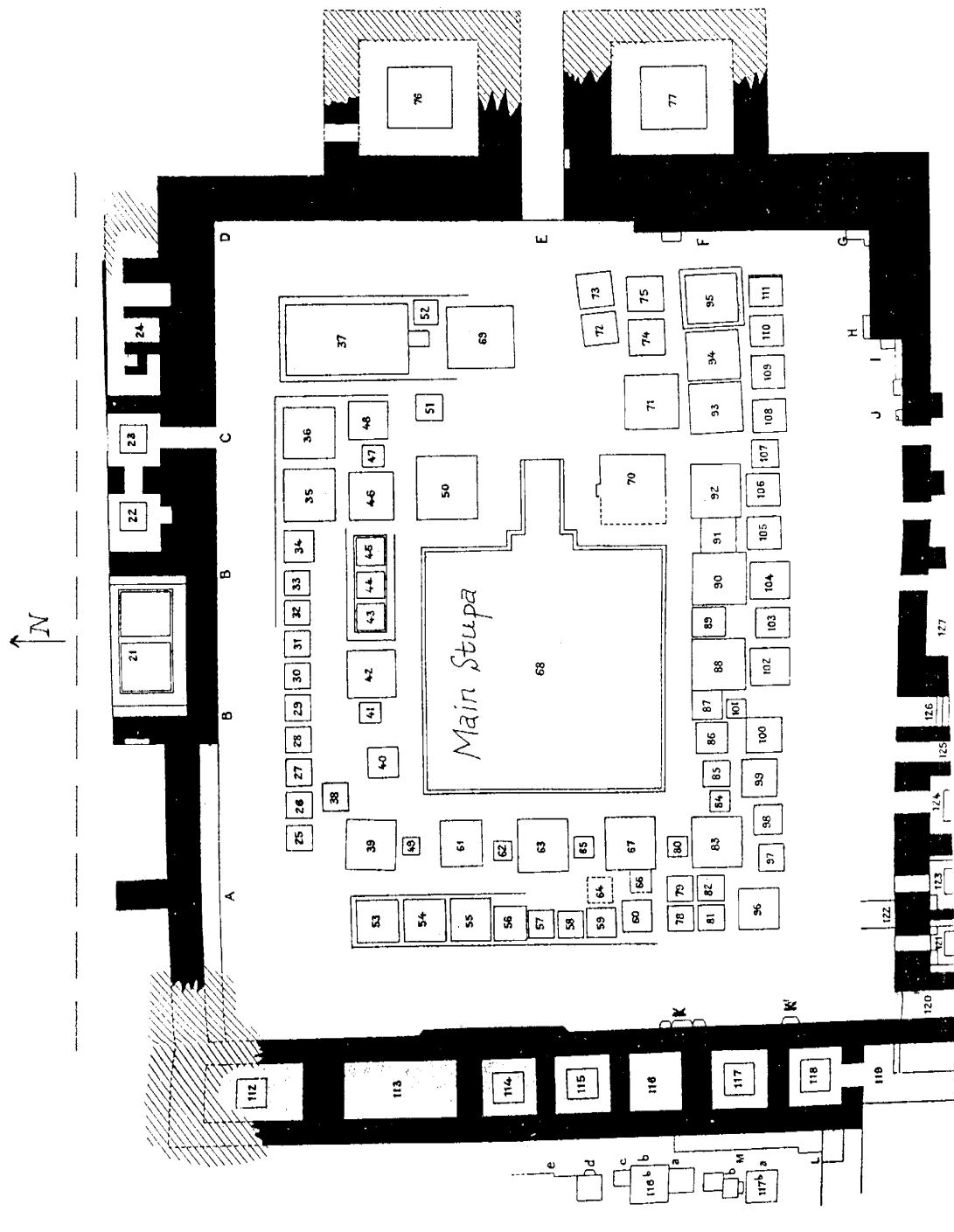


Fig. 8.30a Plan of Tapa Kalan, Hadda

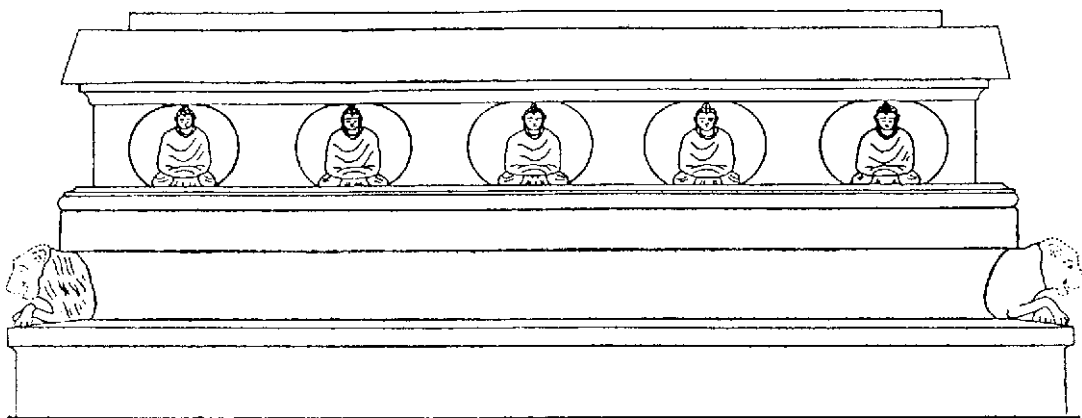


Fig. 8.30b Drawing of Stupa TK 67, Tapa Kalān, Haḍḍa

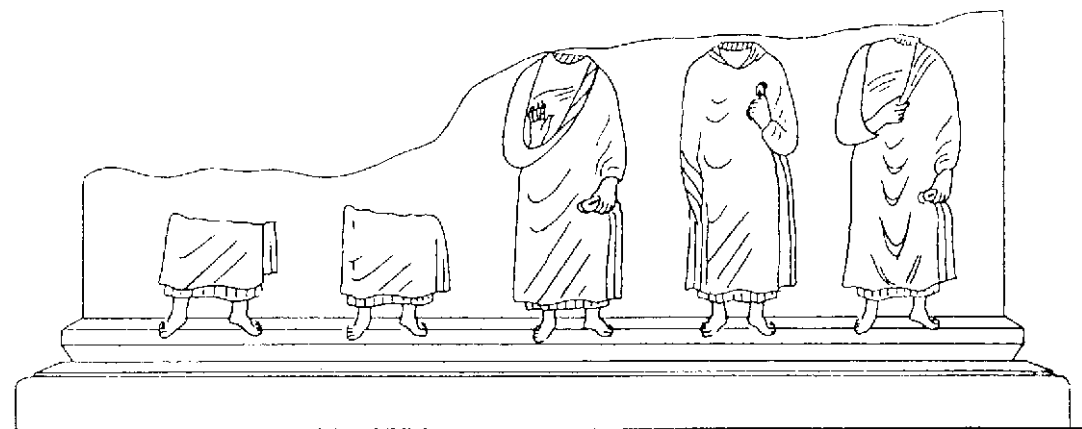


Fig. 8.30c Drawing of Stupa TK 86, Tapa Kalān, Haḍḍa

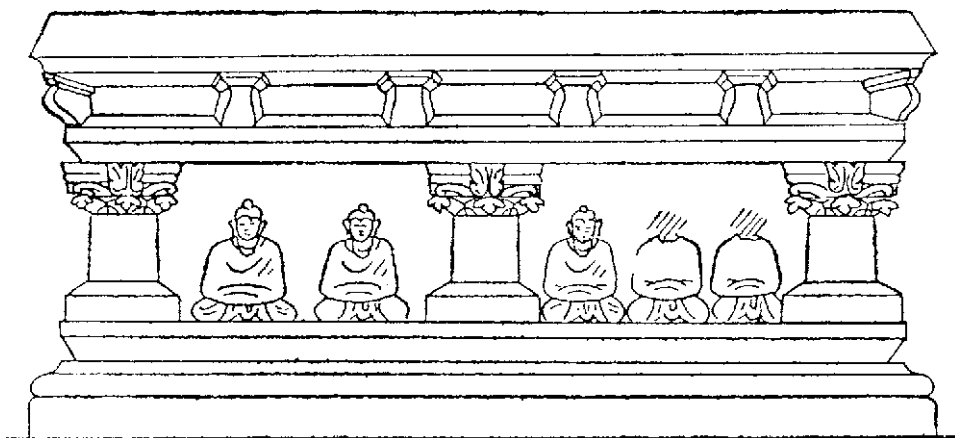


Fig. 8.30d Drawing of Stupa TK 97 (north side), Tapa Kalān, Haḍḍa

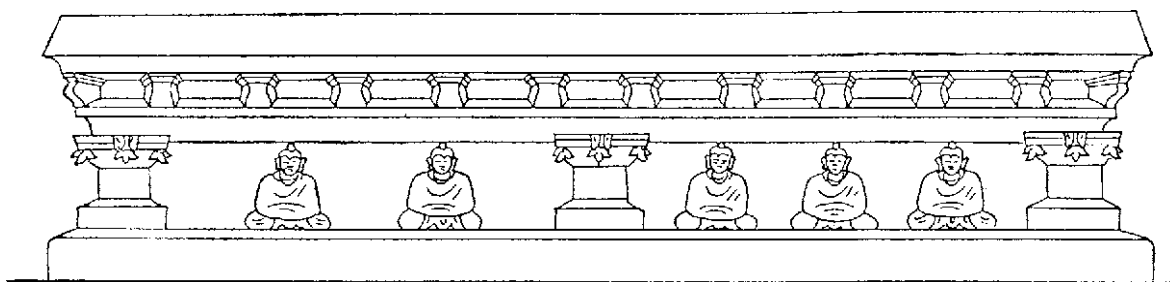


Fig. 8.30e Drawing of Stupa TK 100 (north side), Tapa Kalān, Haḍḍa

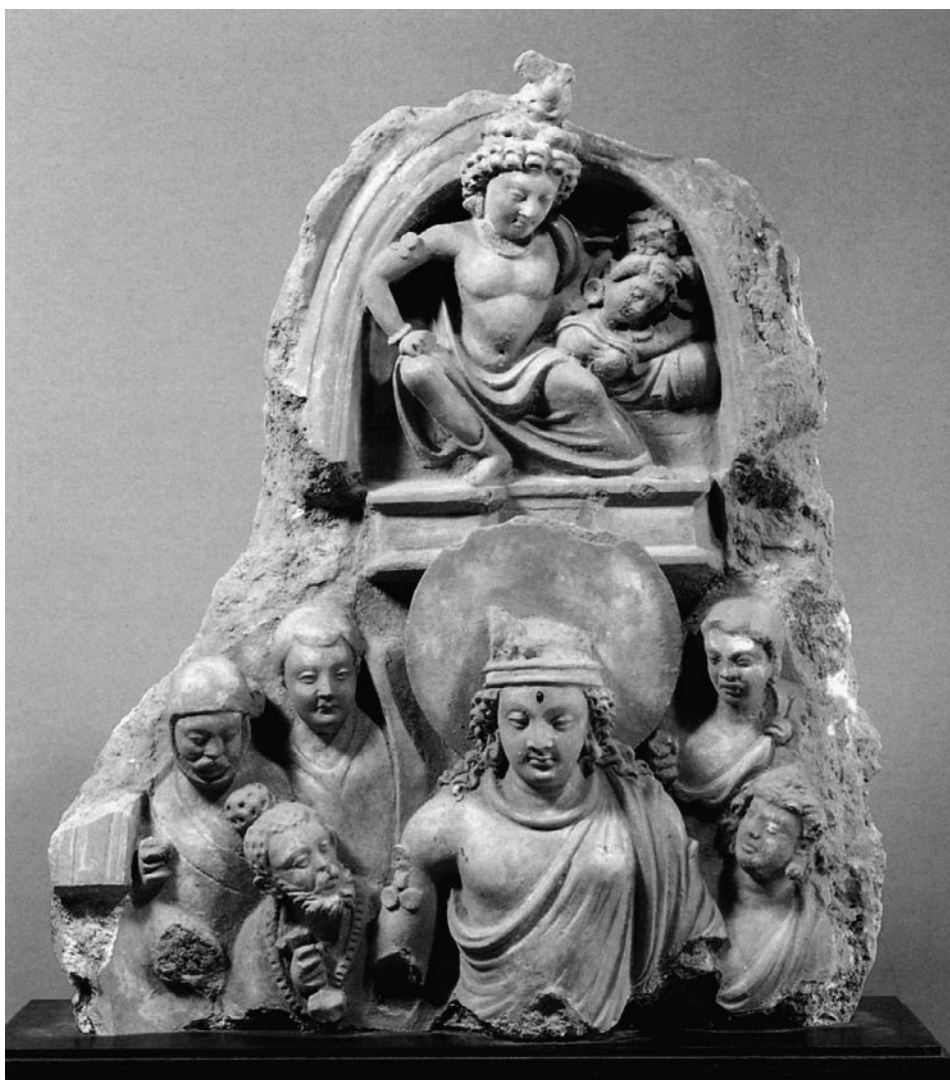


Fig. 8.30f Stucco relief with Siddhārtha's Renunciation, probably from Tapa Kalān, Tapa Kalān, Haḍḍa, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Hirayama collection, Kamakura



# TAPA - I - KAFARIHA

Scale : 1/500  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Meters

PLAN - A

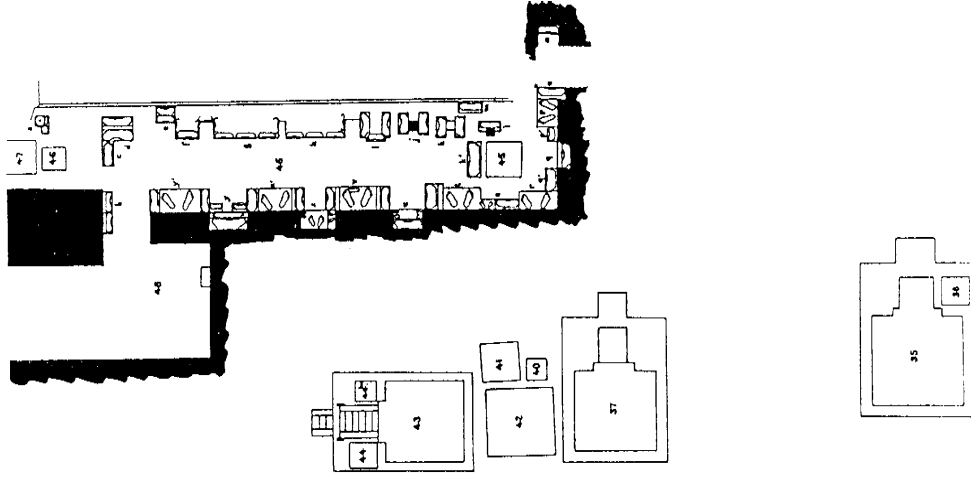
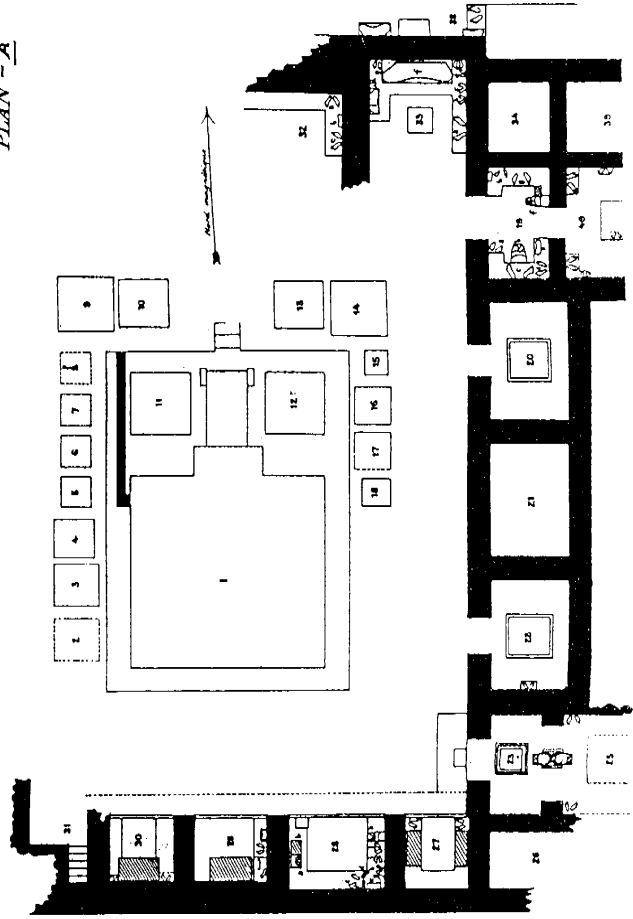


Fig. 8.31a Plan of Tapa-i-Kafariha, Hadda

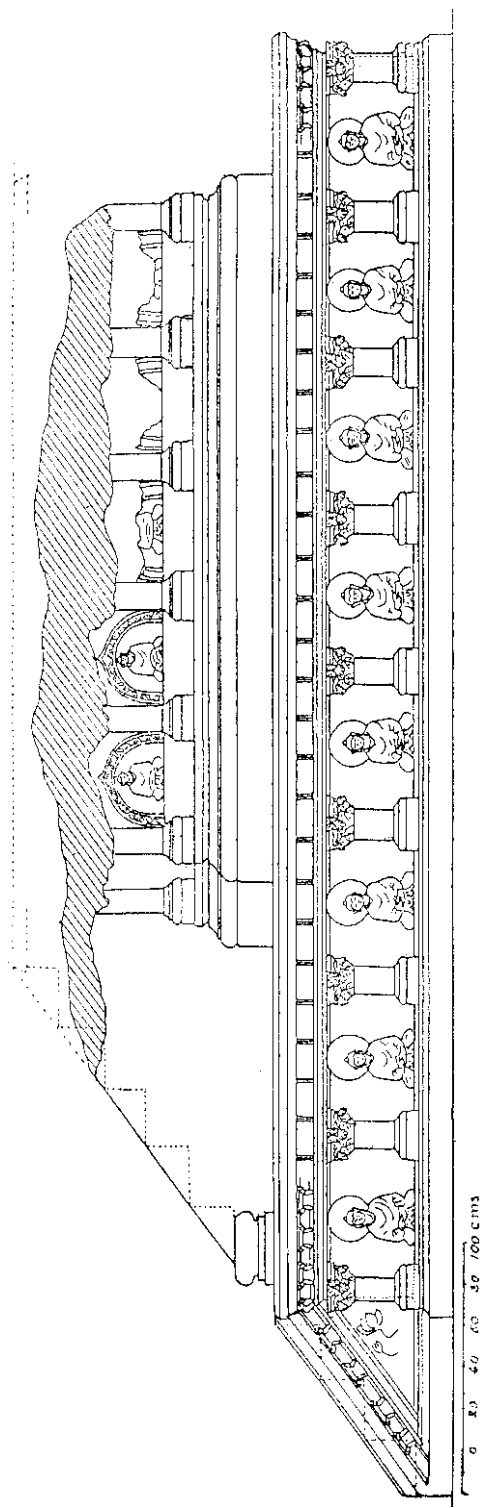


Fig. 8.31b Drawing of Stupa K 43, Tapa-i-Kafariha, Hadda



Fig. 8.31c Niche with Siddhartha (?), probably from Tapa-i-Kafariha, Haḍḍa, ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century, stucco, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

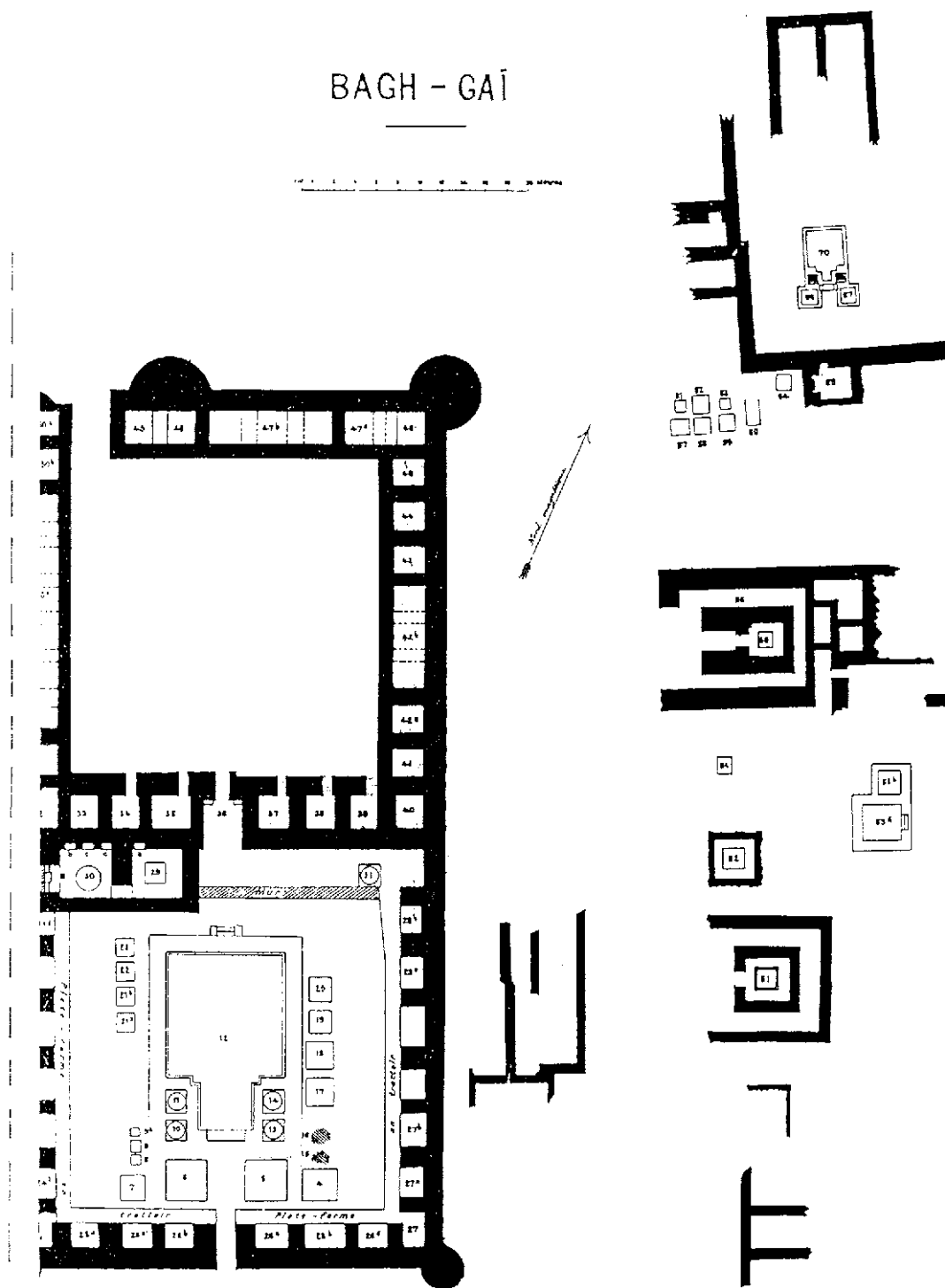


Fig. 8.32a Plan of Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa





Fig. 8.32b View of Stupa B 12, Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa



Fig. 8.32c Stucco images in niches on the lower level of Stupa B 11 (with view of Stupa B12 at far left), Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa

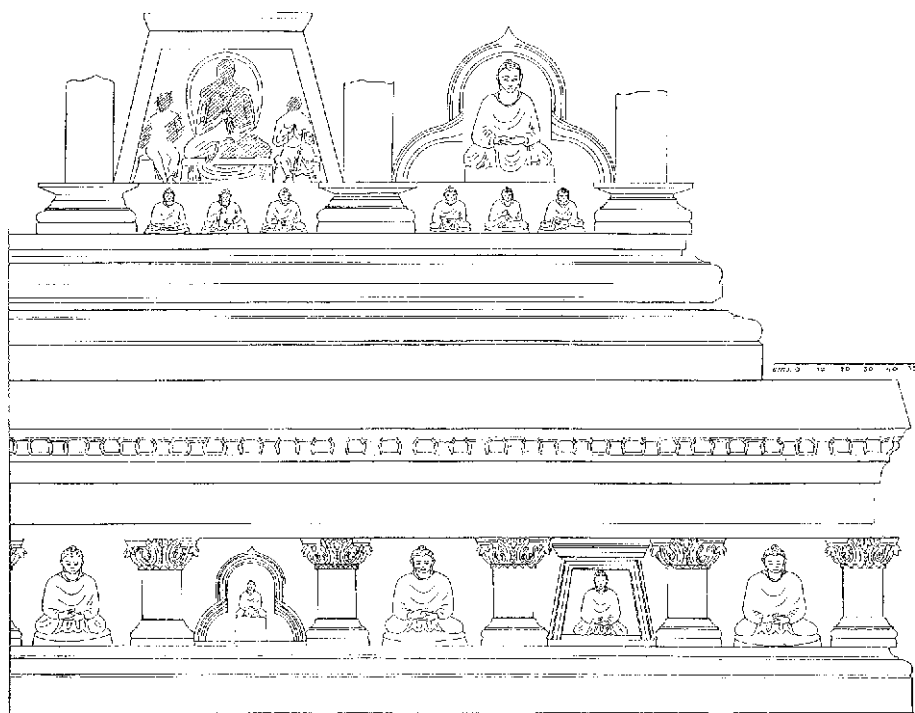


Fig. 8.32d Drawing of some image remains on Stupa B 12, Bāgh-Gai, Haḍḍa

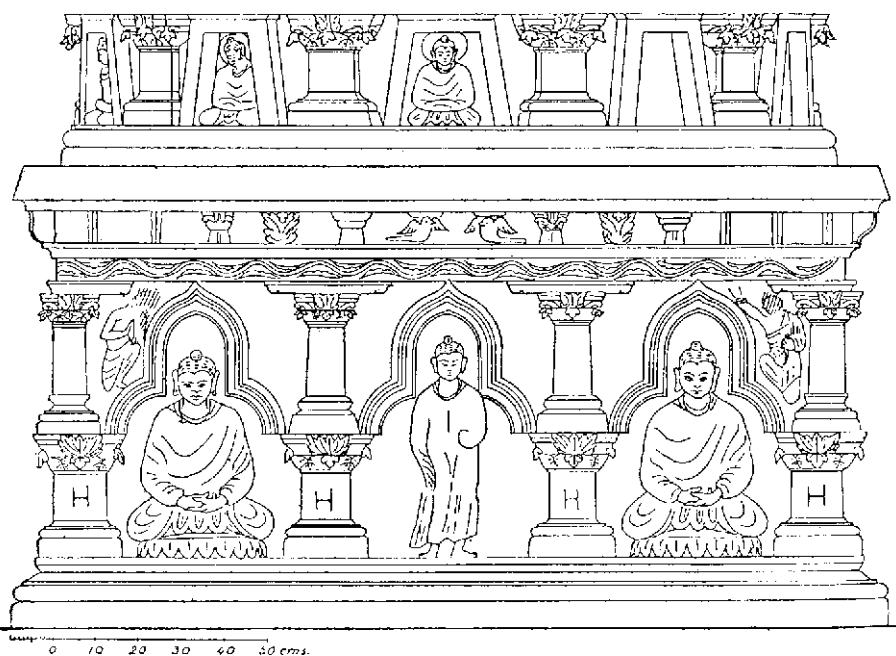


Fig. 8.32e Drawing of Stupa B31 (southeast side), Bāgh-Gai, Haḍḍa

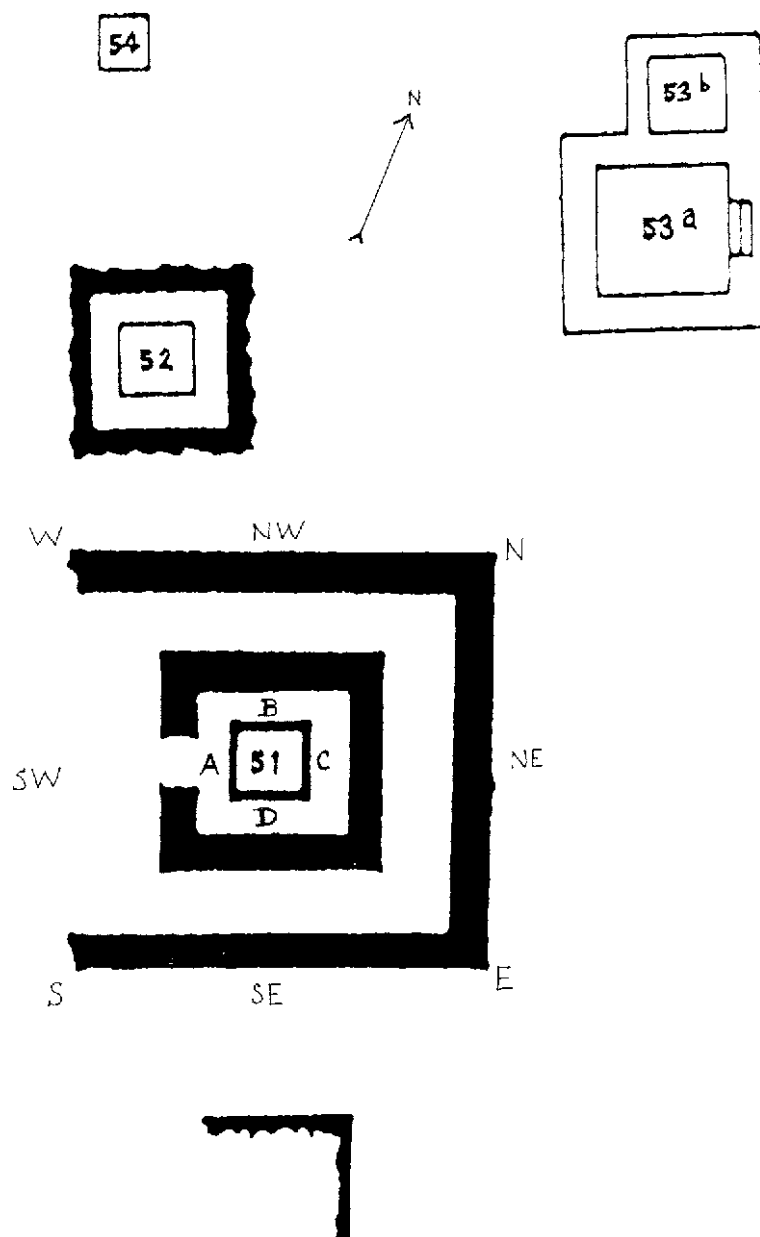


Fig. 8.33a Plan of Stupa Shrine B 51, Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa

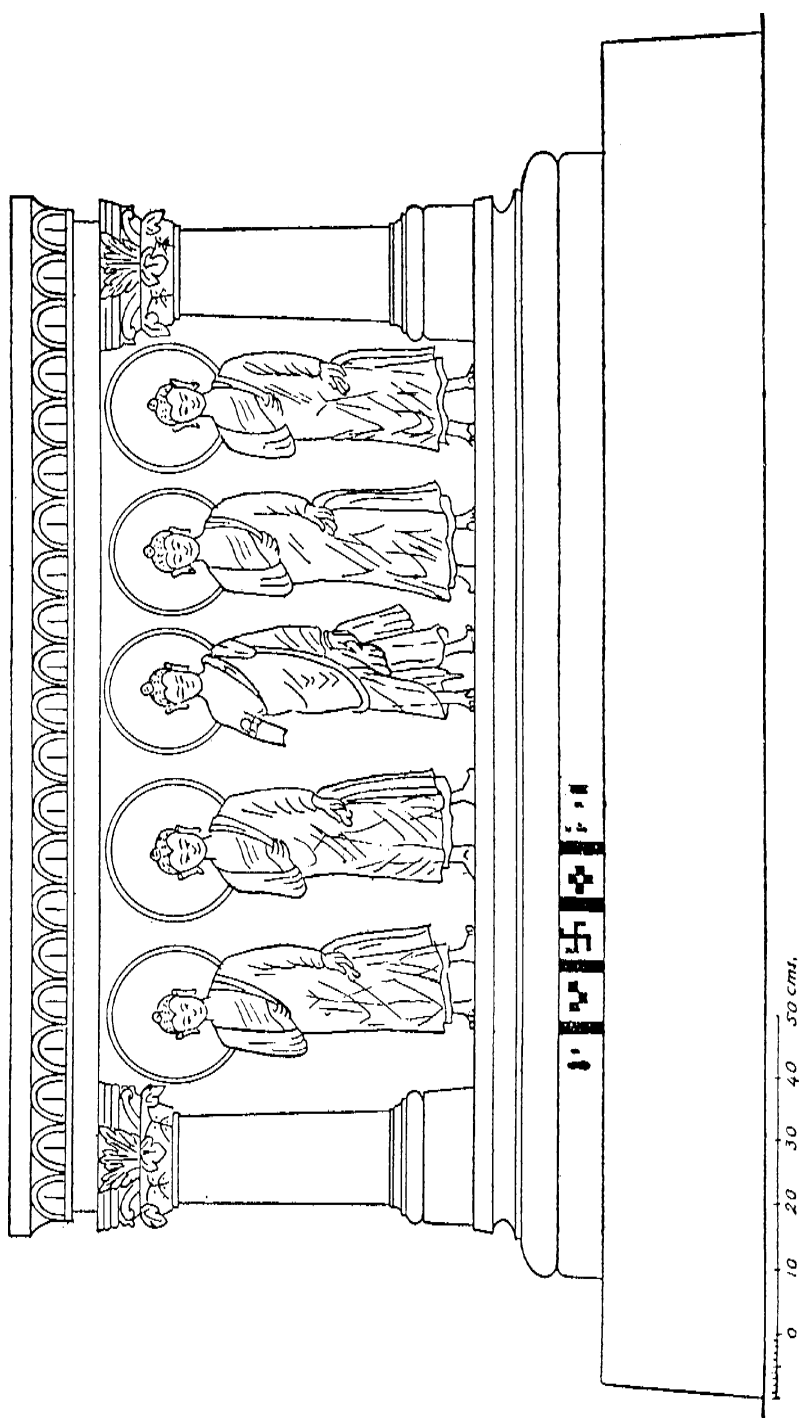


Fig. 8.33b Drawing of Stupa B 51 (southwest [front] side), Bāgh-Gai, Hadda



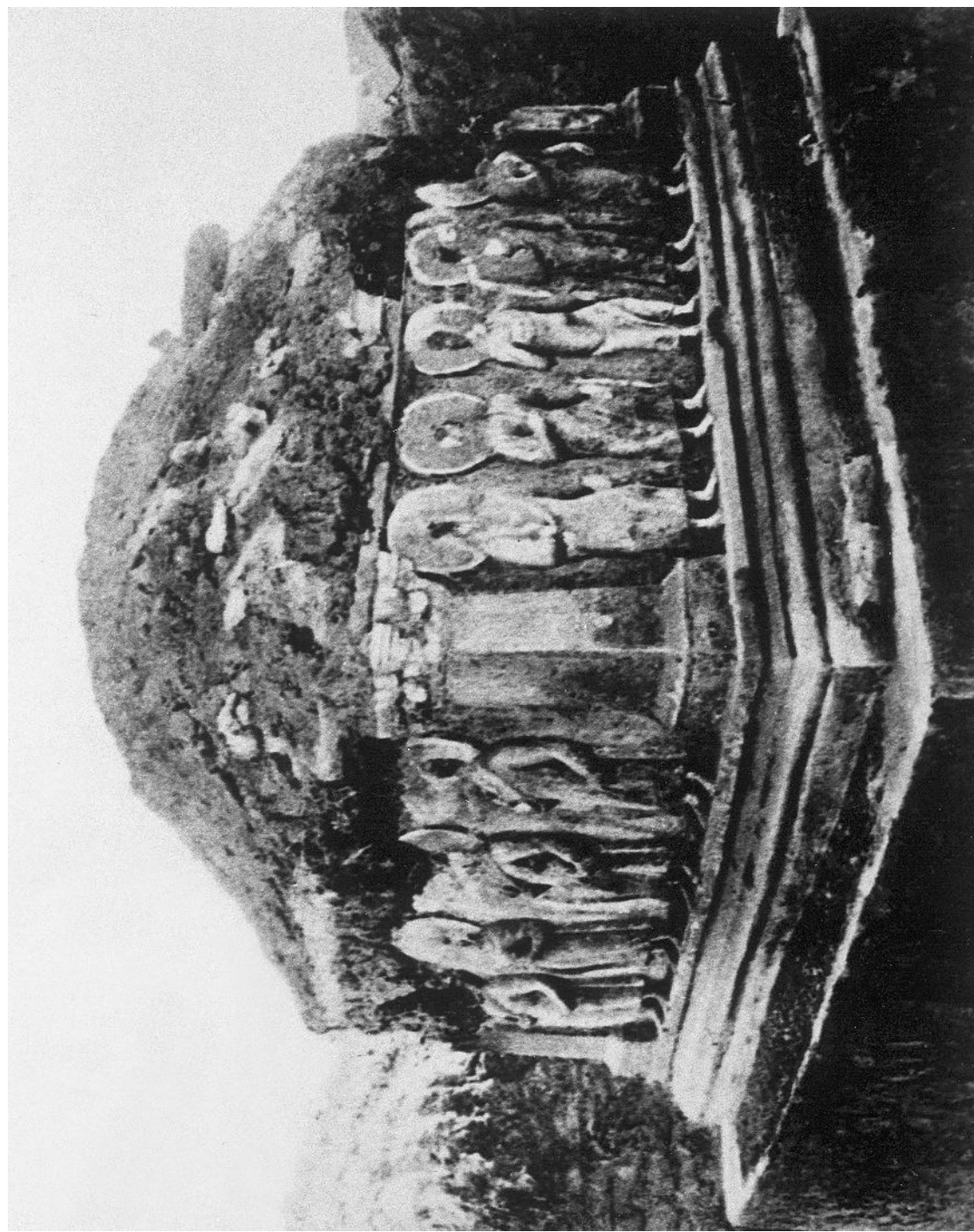


Fig. 8.33c *In-situ* view of Stupa B 51 (from the west corner showing the southwest (right) and northwest (left) sides), Bagh-Gai, Hadqia

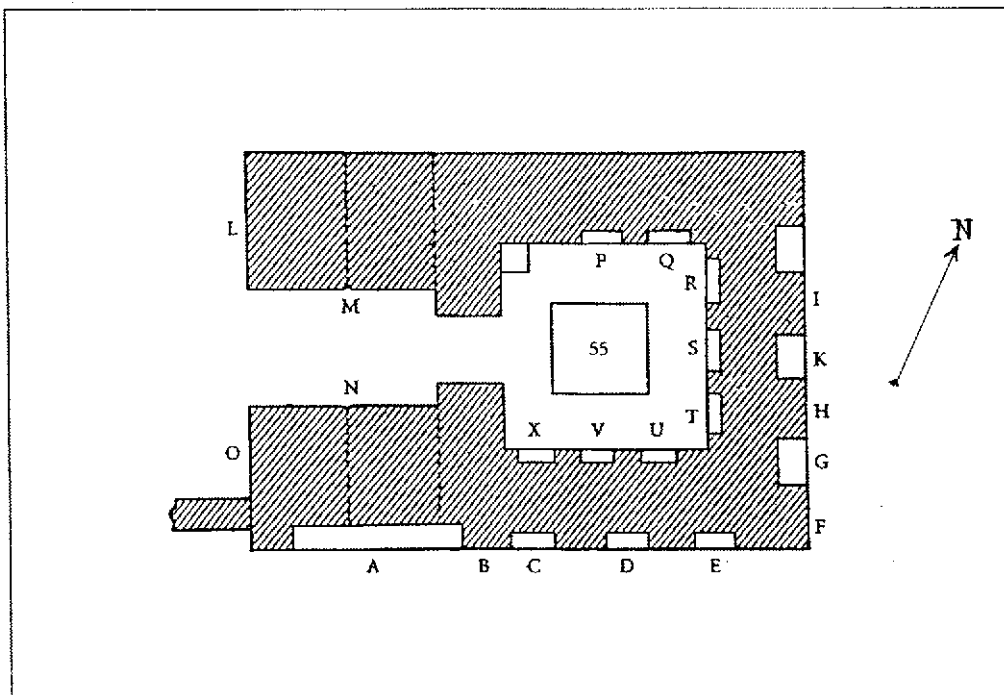


Fig. 8.34a Plan of Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Hadda

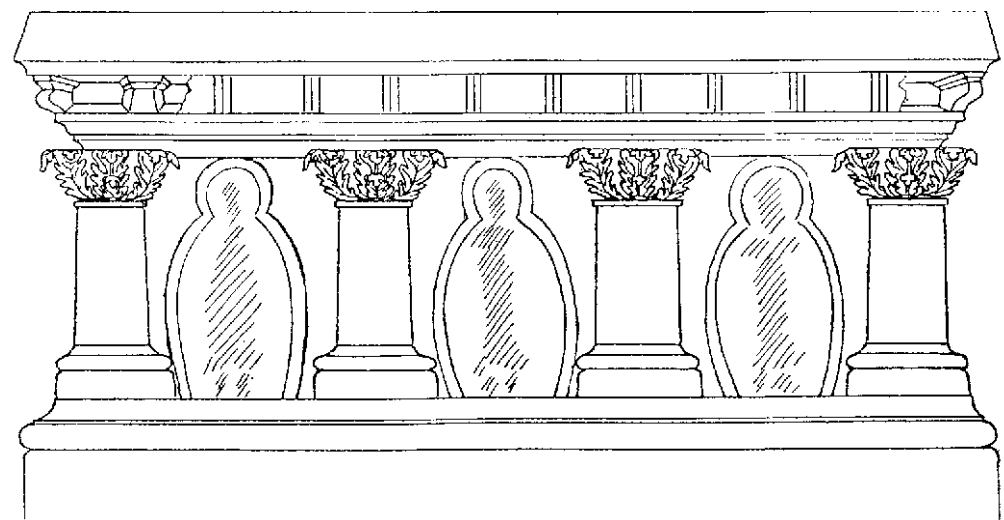


Fig. 8.34b Drawing of Stupa B 55 (northwest side), in Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Hadda

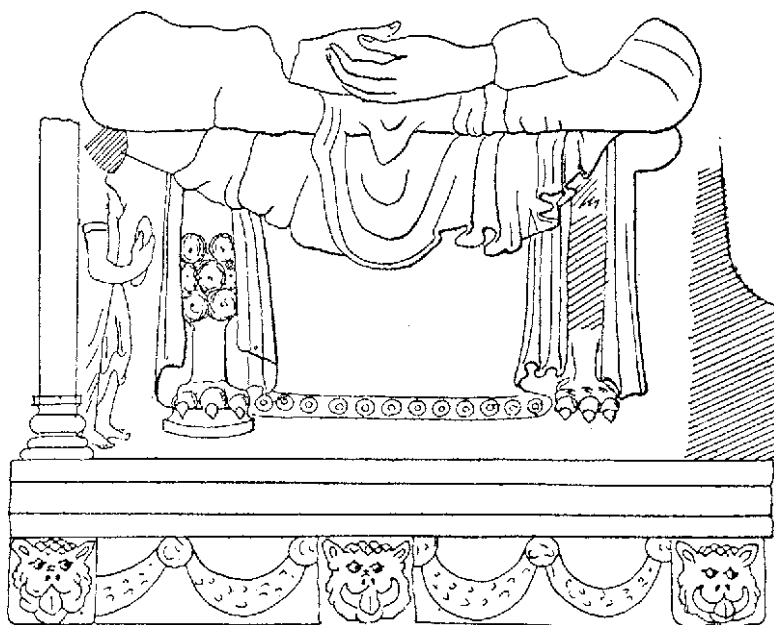


Fig. 8.34c Drawing of Niche "R", back wall inside Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Hadda

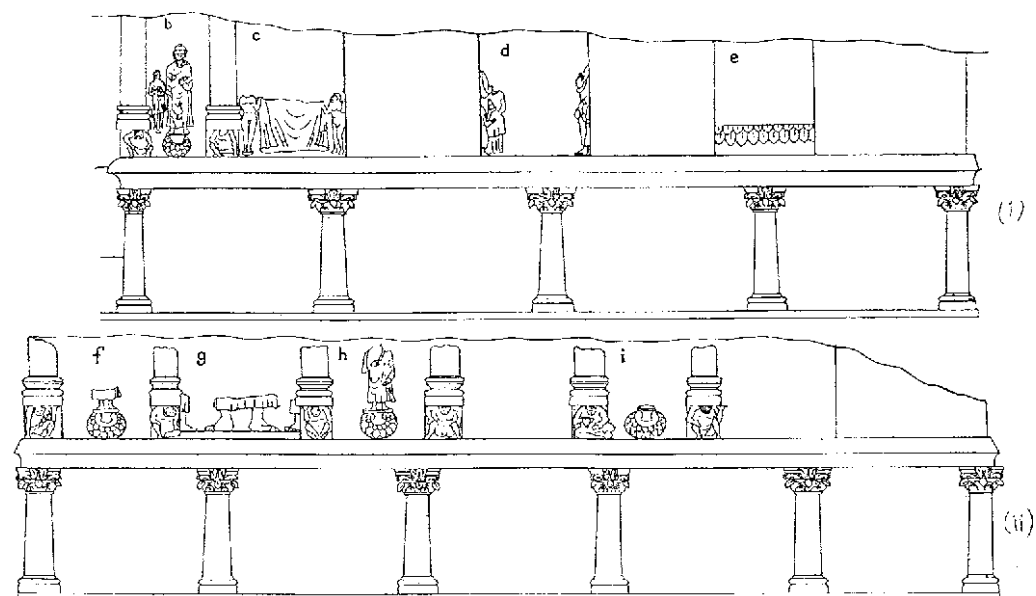


Fig. 8.34d Elevation drawing of (i) outer southeast wall and (ii) outer northeast wall, Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Hadda





Fig. 8.34e Images of “b” section, outer southeast wall, Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa



Fig. 8.34f Niche “c”, outer southeast wall, Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa





Fig. 8.34g Images on the left side of Niche “d”, outer southeast wall, Stupa Shrine B 56, Bāgh-Gai, Hadda



Fig. 8.34h Images on the right side of Niche “d” with Maitreya Bodhisattva and attendant monk, outer southeast wall, Stupa Shrine B 56, Bāgh-Gai, Hadda



Fig 8.34i Relief images, Achilles Plate from the Sevso Treasure, detail showing Apollo leaning on a pillar, Byzantine, Athens or Constantinople, ca. 400, silver, private collection



↑  
Fig. 8.35a Rows of image niches in two levels, from the antechamber/entrance corridor (wall "n"), Stupa Shrine B 56, Bagh-Gai, Hadda



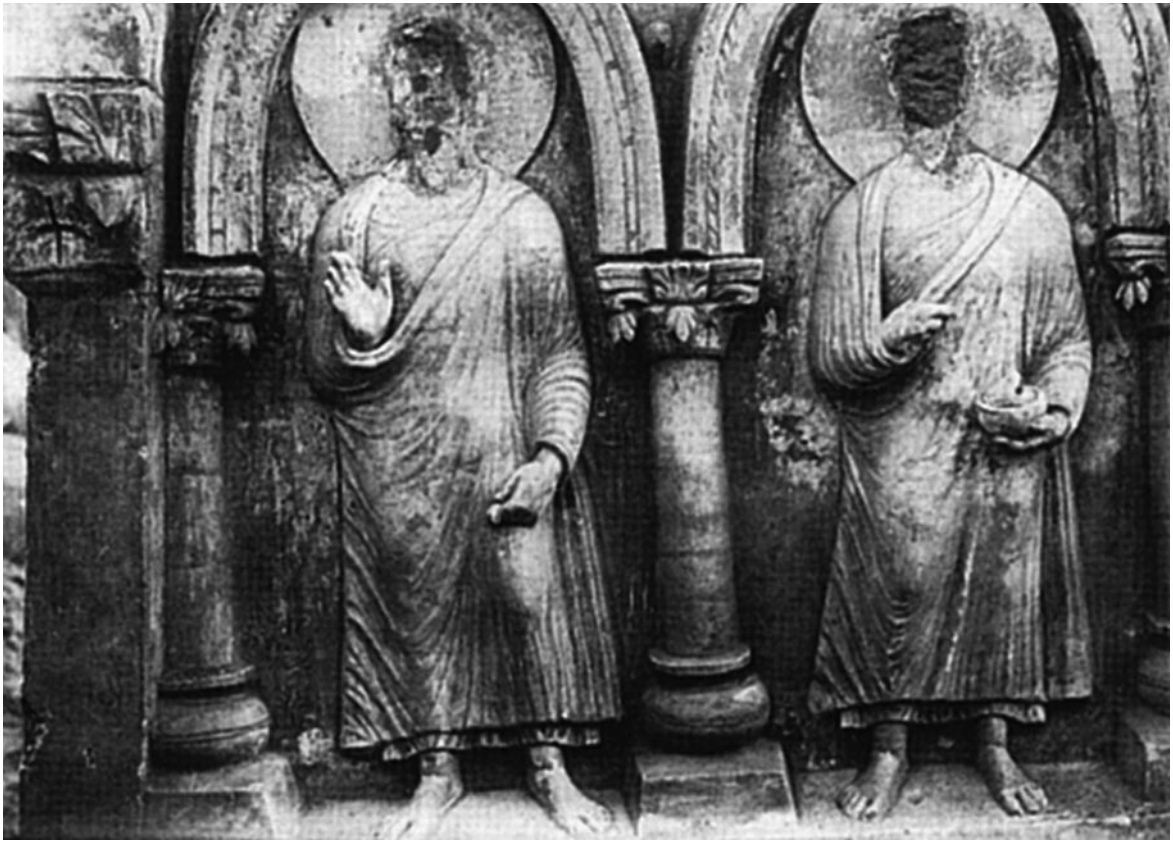


Fig. 8.35b Detail of image niches on wall “m”, antechamber/entrance corridor, Stupa Shrine B 56, Bāgh-Gai, Haḍḍa



Fig. 8.35c Renunciation, stone relief, possibly from Nimogram, Swāt, Pakistan, steatite, Musée Guimet, Paris

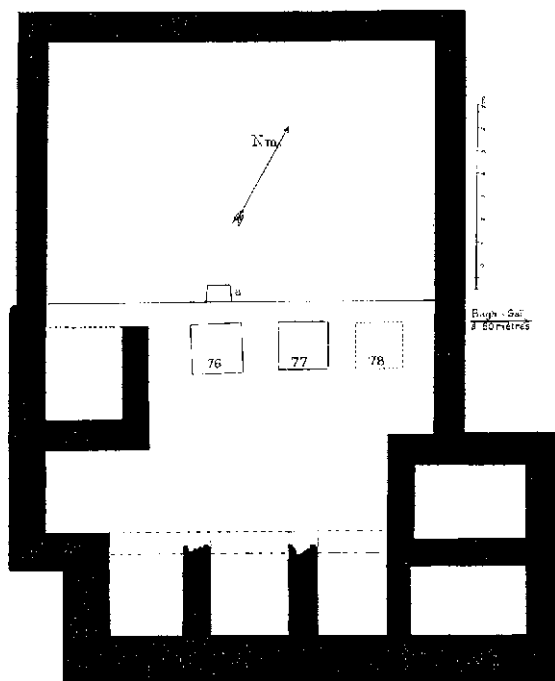


Fig. 8.36a Plan of the western site of Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa

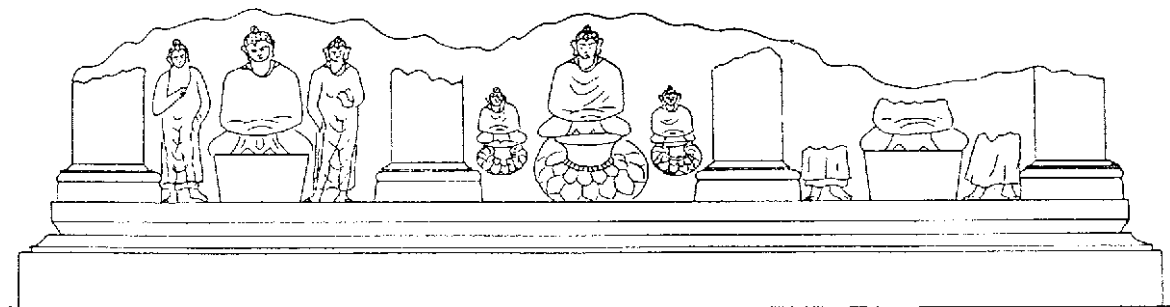


Fig. 8.36b Drawing of Stupa B 76 (southeast side), Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa

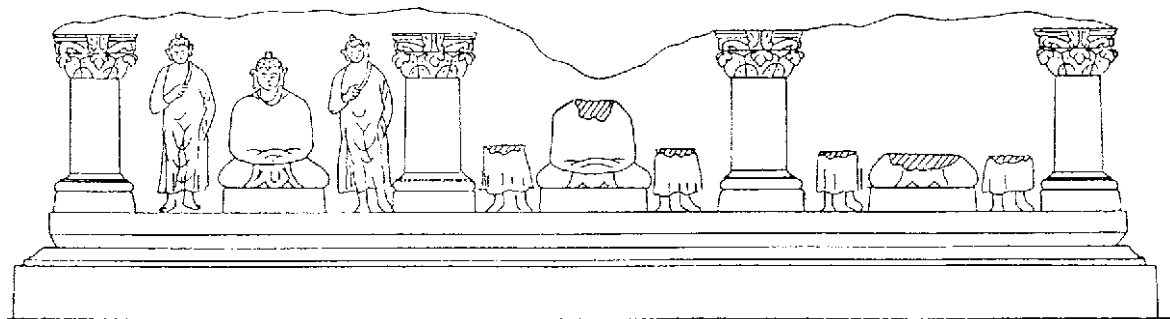


Fig. 8.36c Drawing of Stupa B 77, Bagh-Gai, Haḍḍa



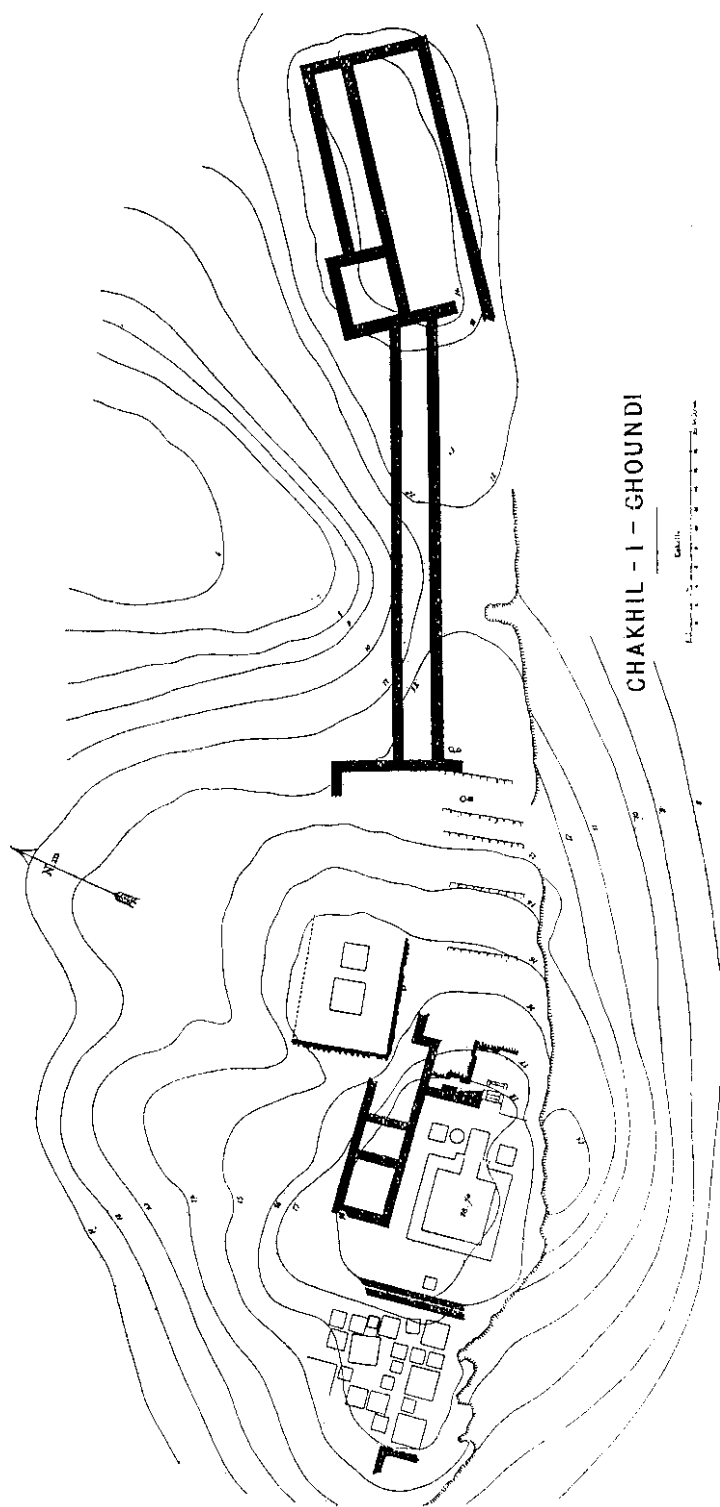


Fig. 8.37a Plan of Chakhil-i-Ghoundi, Hadda

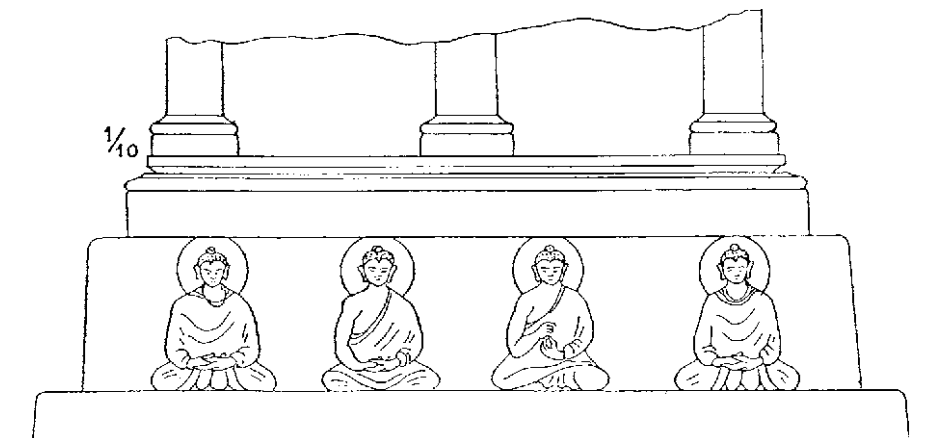


Fig. 8.37b Drawing of Stupa C 24, Chakhil-i-Ghoundi, Hadda

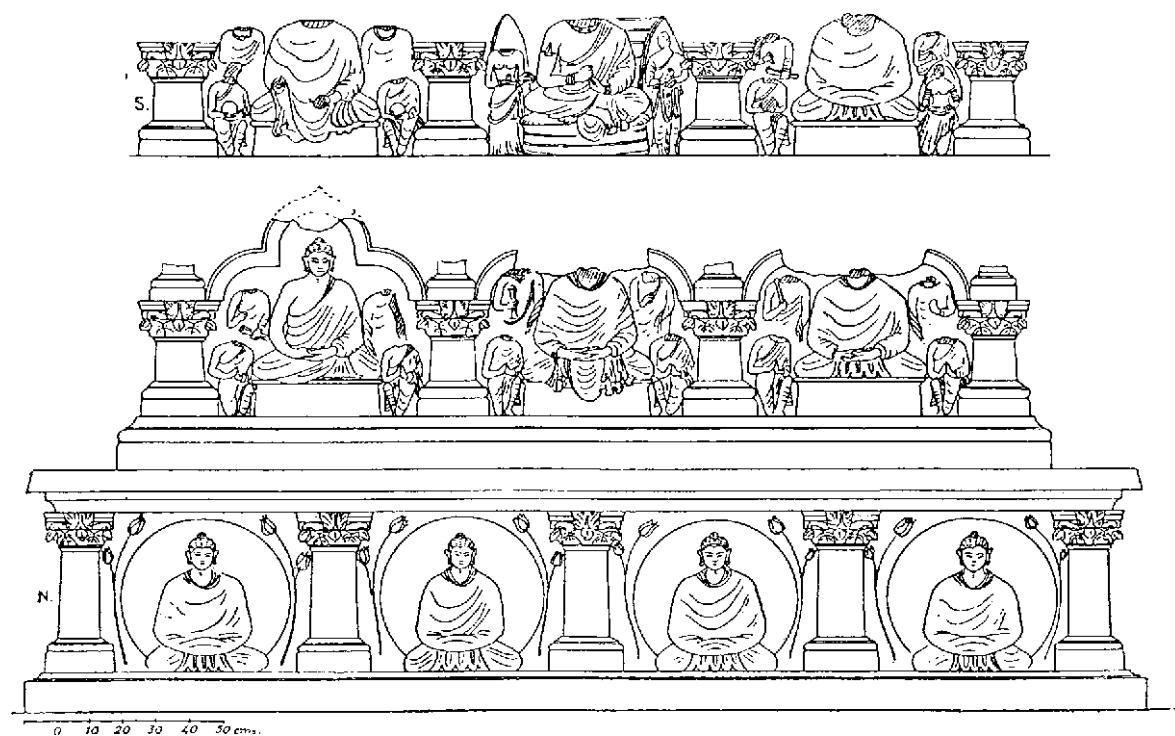


Fig. 8.37c Drawing of Stupa C 5, (north and south sides), Chakhil-i-Ghoundi, Hadda

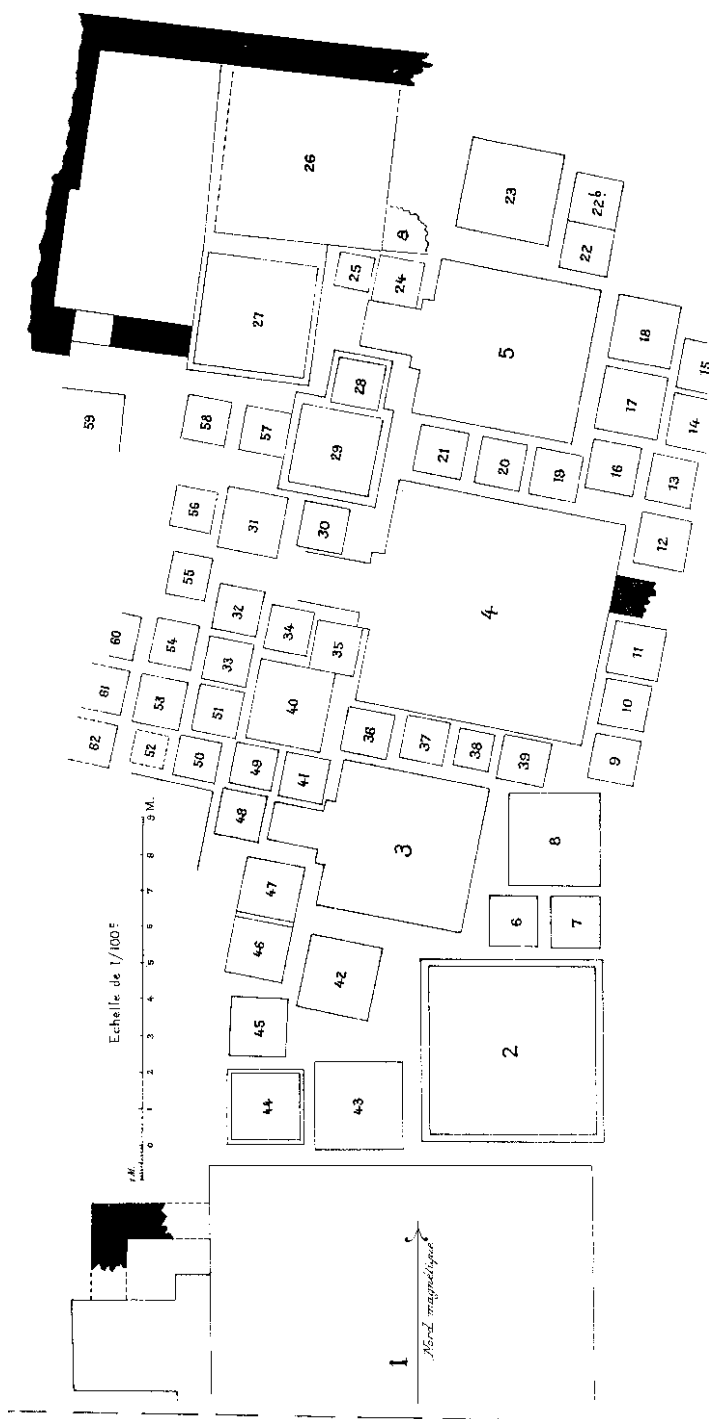


Fig. 8.38a Plan of Prates, Hadida

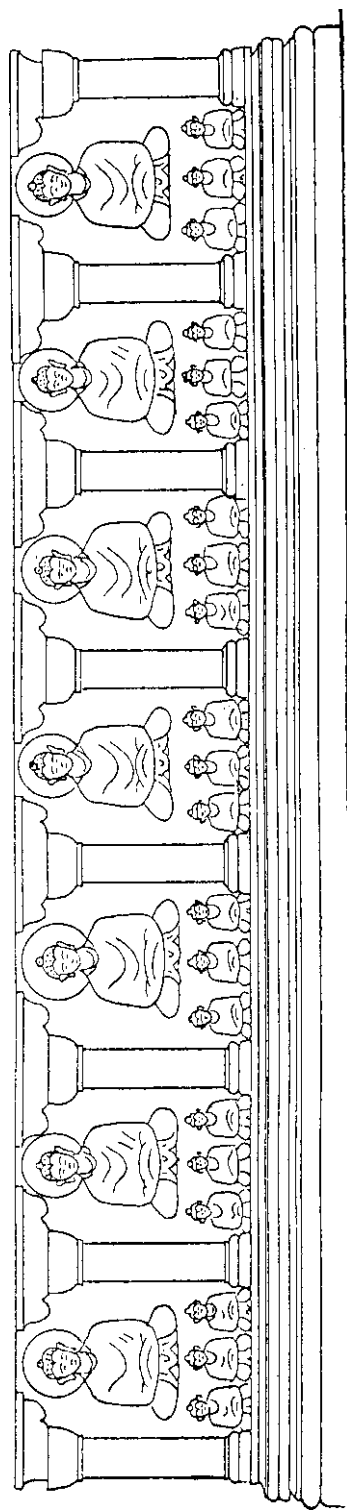


Fig. 8.38b Drawing of Stupa P 1 (north side), Prates, Haḍḍa

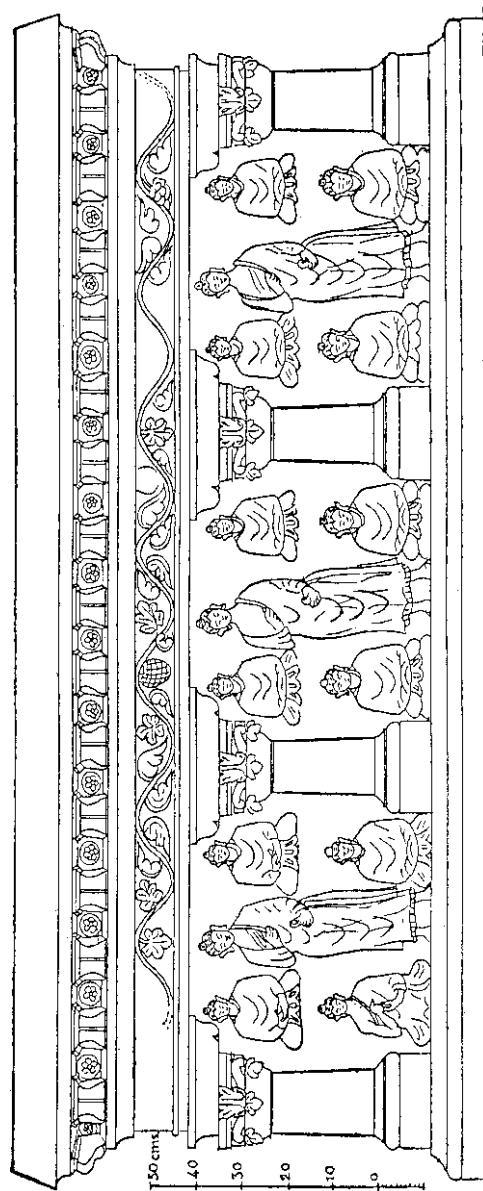


Fig. 8.38c Drawing of Stupa P 8 (south side), Prates, Haḍḍa



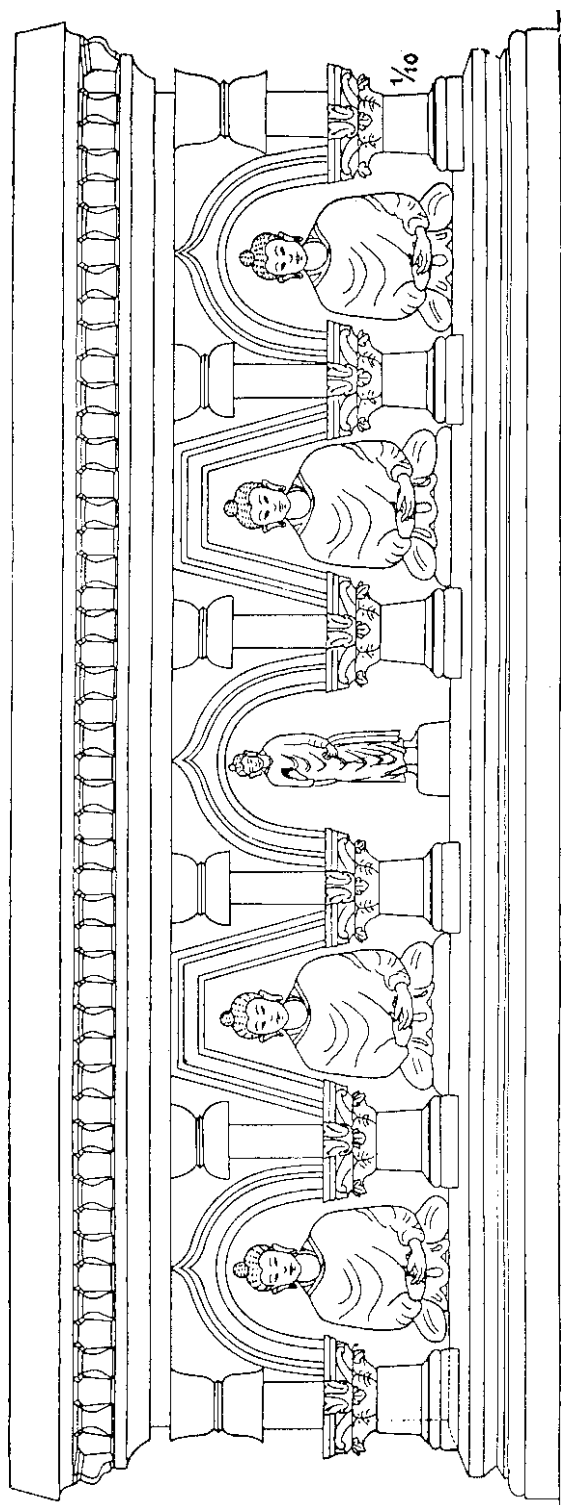


Fig. 8.38d Drawing of Stupa P 29, Prates, Hadḍa

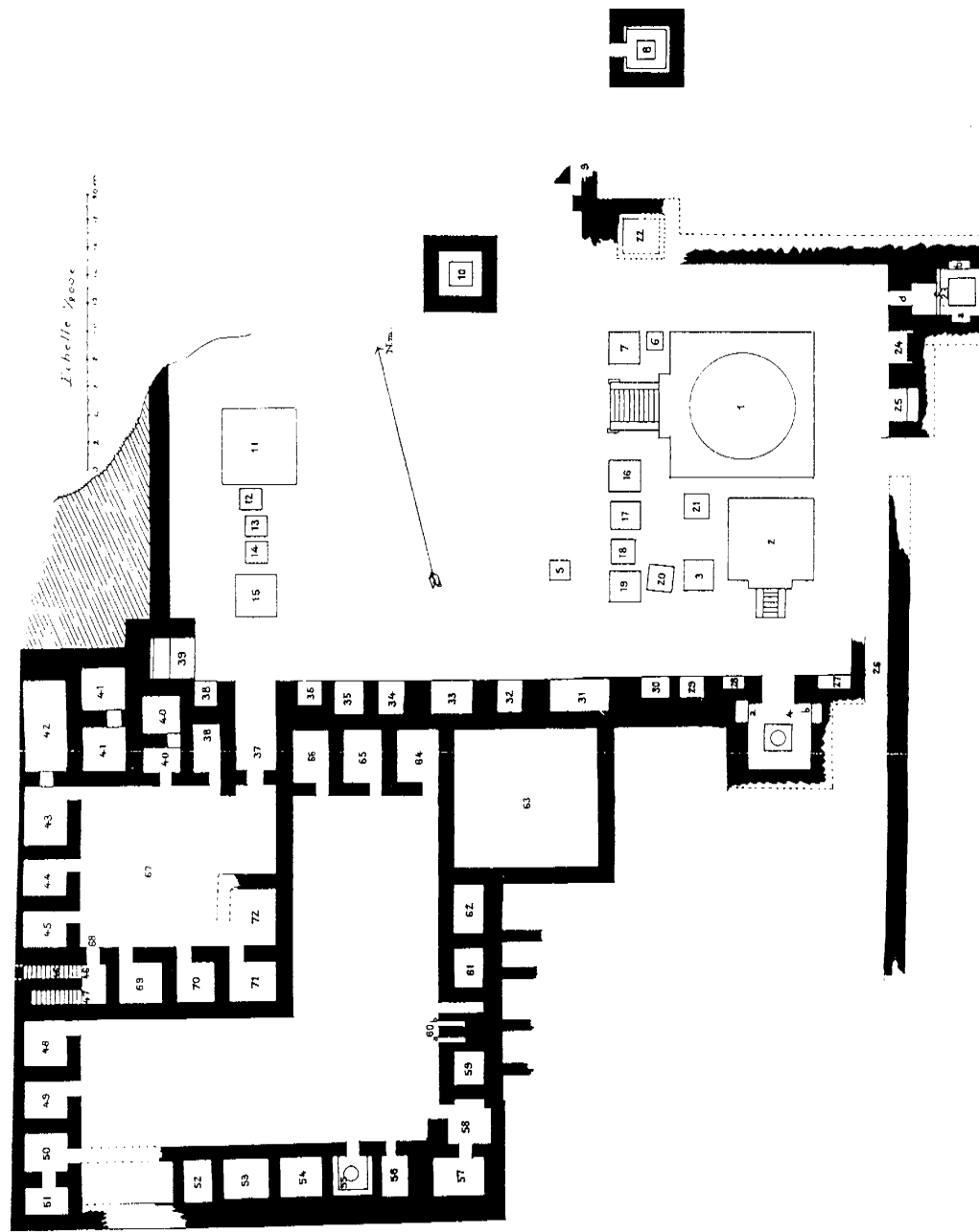


Fig. 8.39a Plan of Gar-nað, Hadda

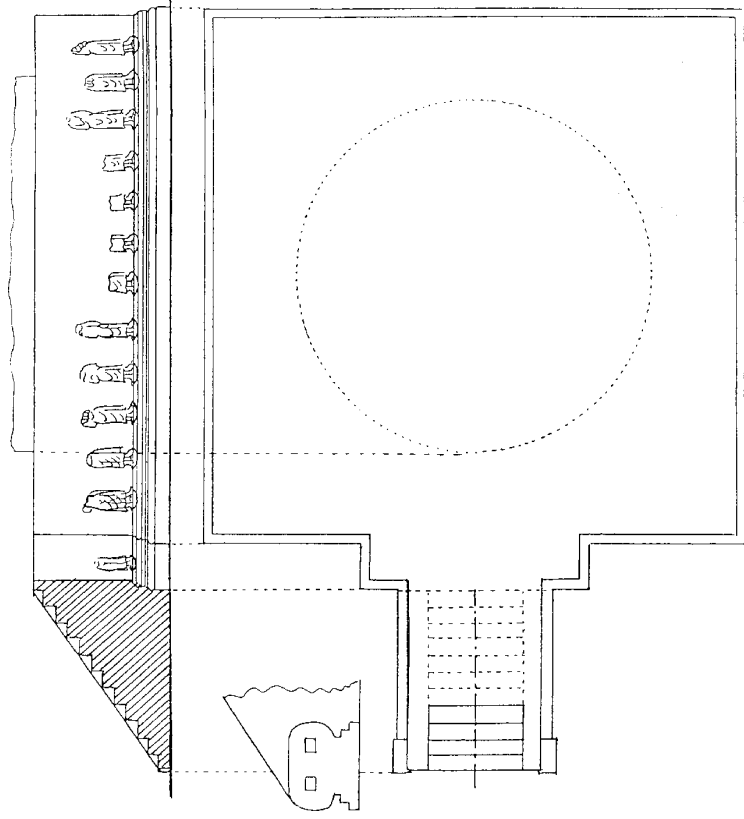


Fig. 8.39b Plan and elevation drawing of Stupa A 1 (south side), Gar-nao, Hadda

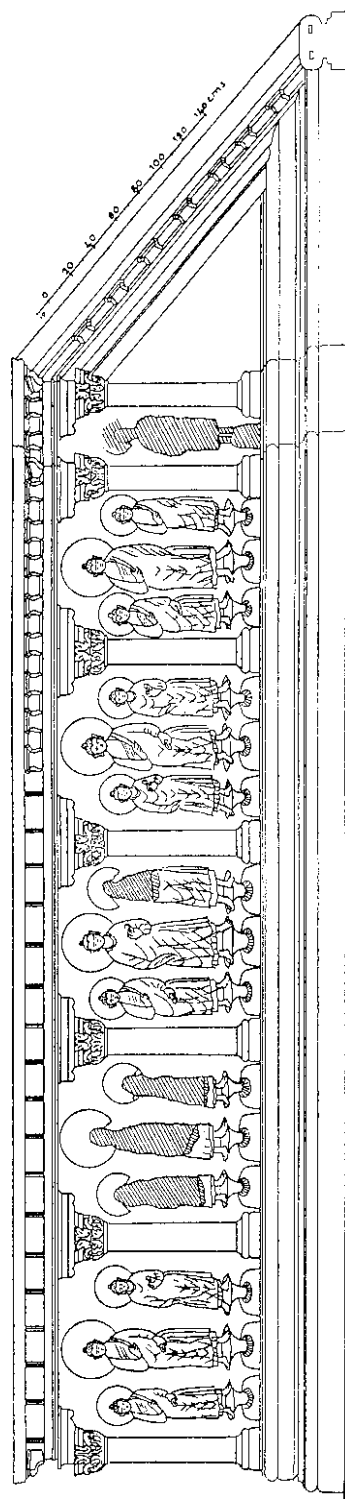


Fig. 8.39c Drawing of Stupa A 2 (west side), Gar-nao, Hadda

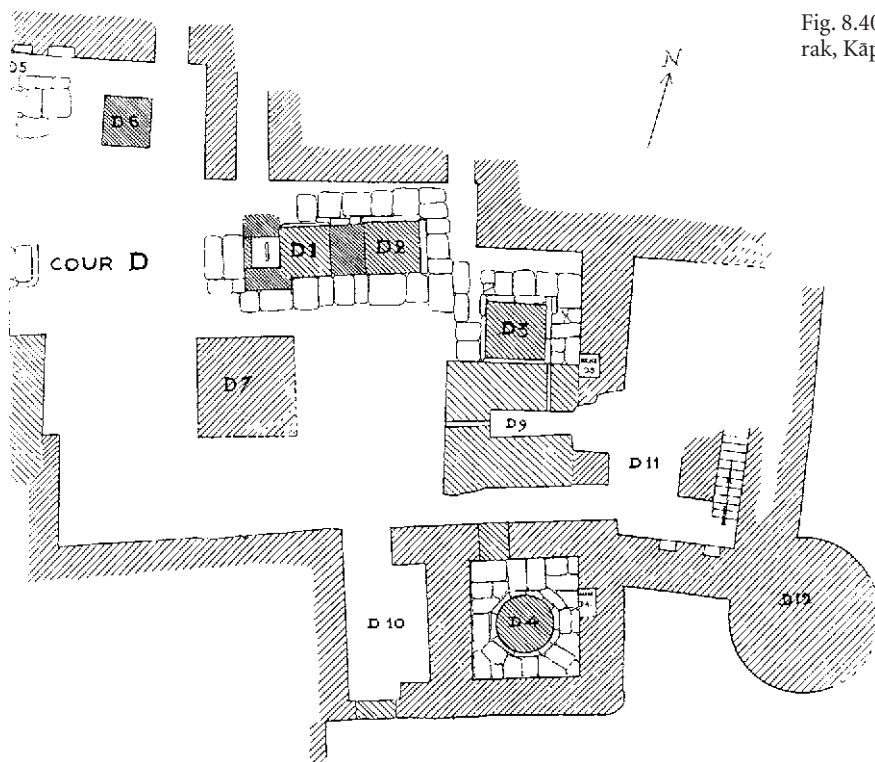


Fig. 8.40a Plan of Court D, Shotorak, Kapisi, Afghanistan



Fig. 8.40b Stupa D 3 (west side), Shotorak, Kapisi



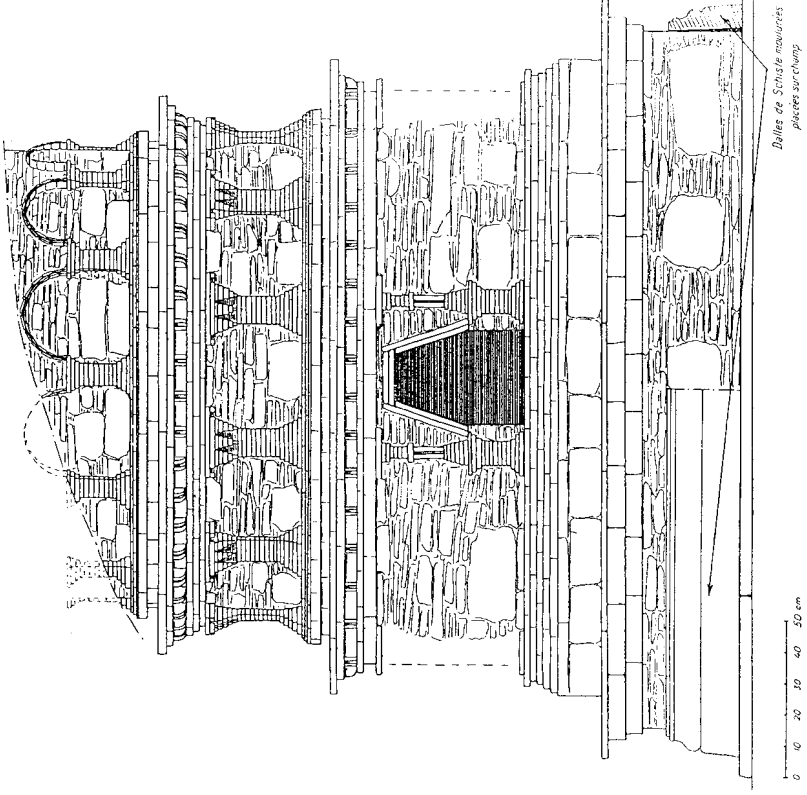


Fig. 8.40c Elevation of Stupa D 3 (west side), Shotorak, Kapisi

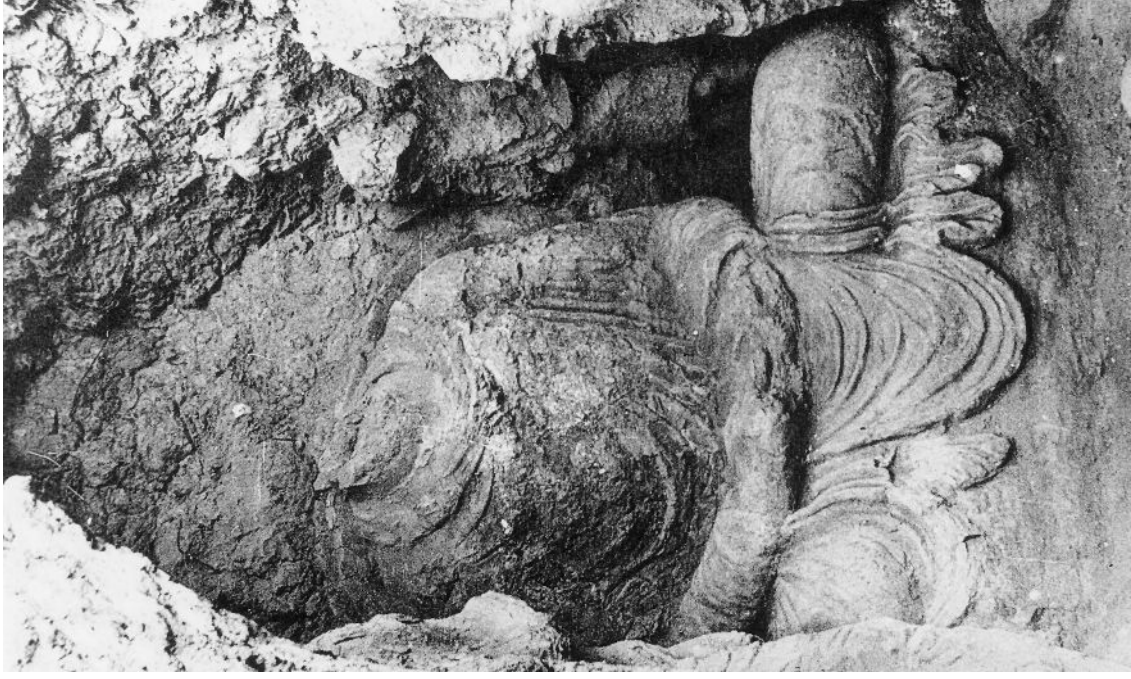


Fig. 8.40d Buddha niche, Stupa D 3, Shotorak, Kapisi



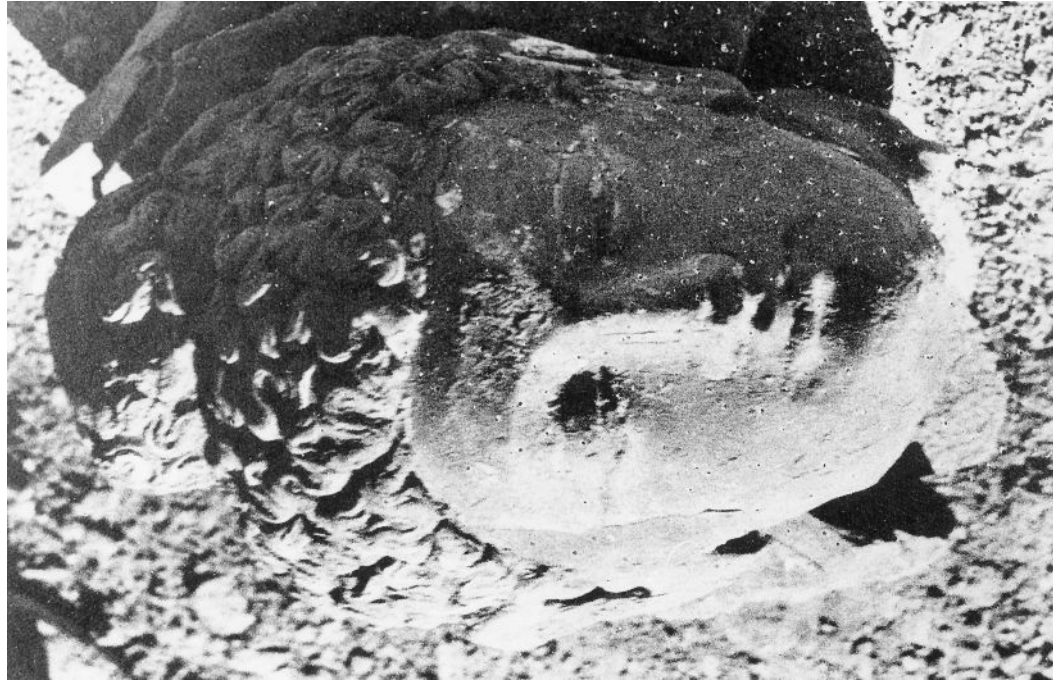


Fig. 8.40e Head of a Buddha from Stupa D 3 (no. 209), Shotorak, Kāpisi

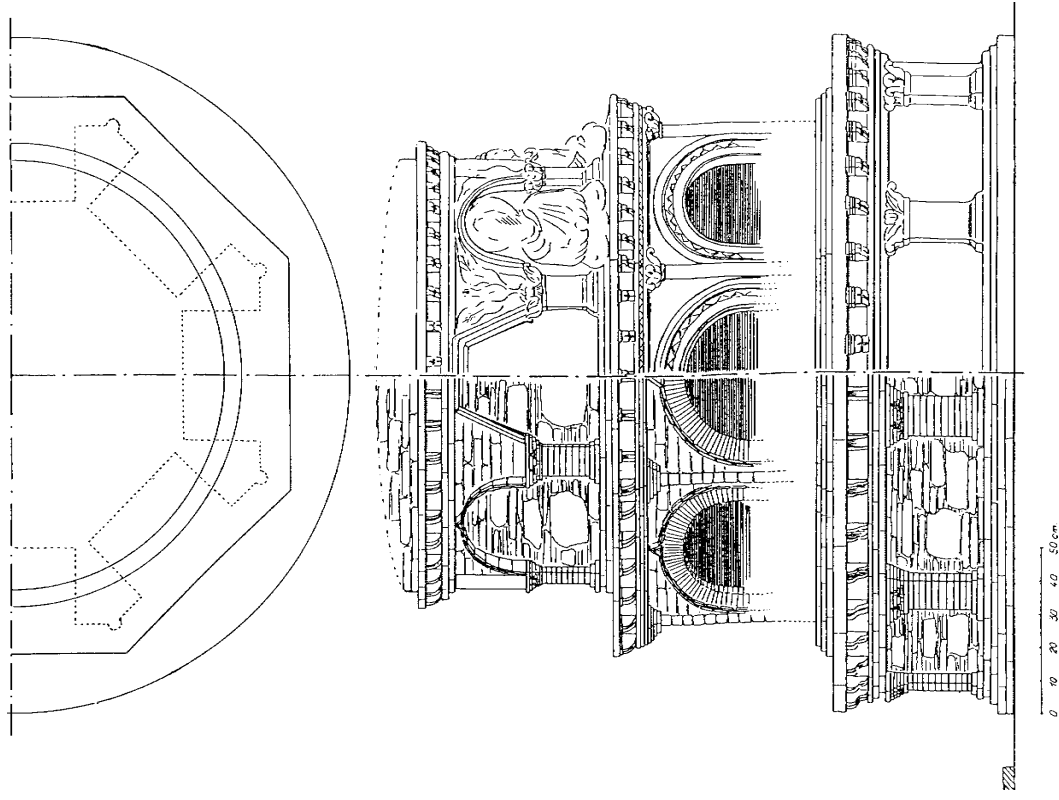


Fig. 8.41a Elevation and plan of Stupa D 4 (west side), Shotorak, Kāpisi





Fig. 8.41b Stupa D 4 (in Chamber D 4) after excavation, view from the southwest, Shotorak, Kapisi



Fig. 8.41c Buddha niches on the third level of Stupa D 4, after excavation, Shotorak, Kapisi



Fig. 8.42a Cave 24, north wall showing transition to domed ceiling, Bāmiyān, Afghanistan

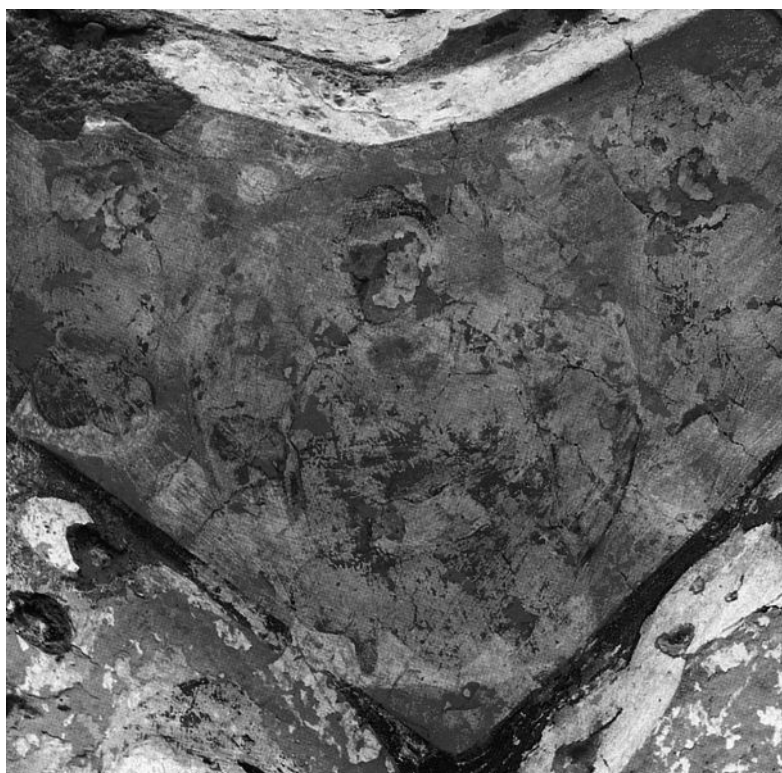


Fig. 8.42b Painting of five seated Buddhas underneath the transitional molding, northeast corner, Cave 24, Bāmiyān





Fig. 8.43a Wall paintings in the west tambour with squinch arches, Cave 129, Bamiyan



Fig. 8.43b Drawing of the west tambour, Cave 129, Bamiyan

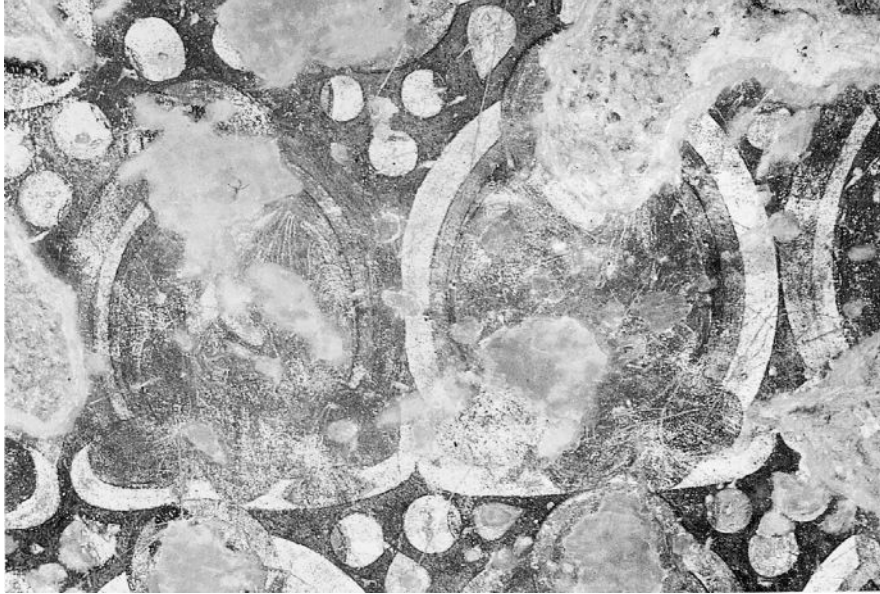


Fig. 8.44 Detail of Buddhas, wall painting in the domed ceiling, Cave 152, Bamiyan



Fig. 8.45 Ceiling dome with 10 large standing Buddhas and circular tambour with wall paintings of 28 standing Buddhas, Cave 164, Bamiyan



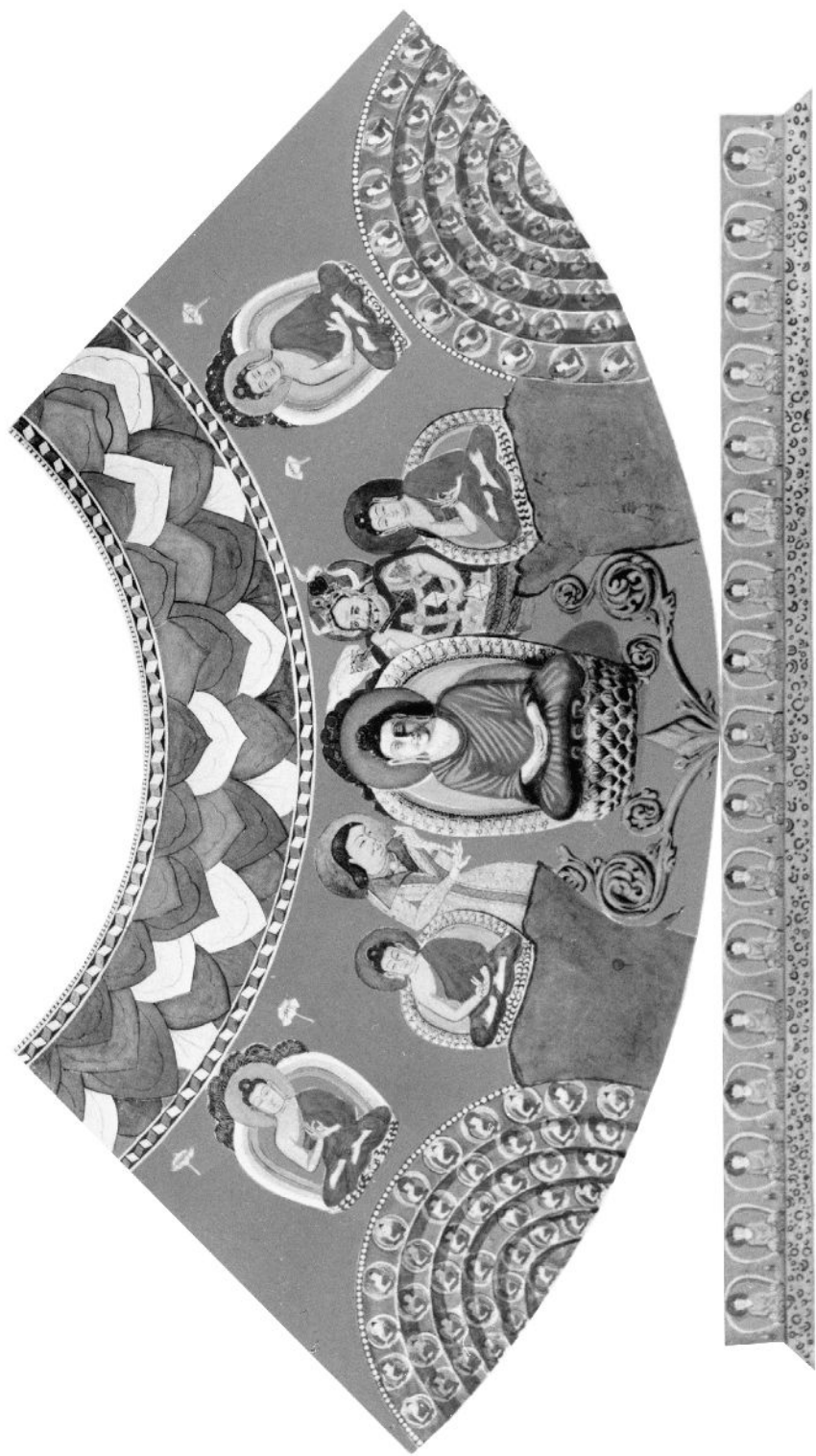


Fig. 8.46 Watercolor painting by J. Carl (June, 1930), north side of the ceiling, Cave 51 (Grotte G), Bamiyan



Fig. 8.47 Seated Buddha in dharmachakra mudrā (possibly Kaśyapa Buddha), from Sahrī-Bahlol C (mound D), now Peshāwar Museum





Fig. 8.48 Group 12 wall painting, Cave 169, Ping-ling ssu, Kansu, ca. 425 A.D.

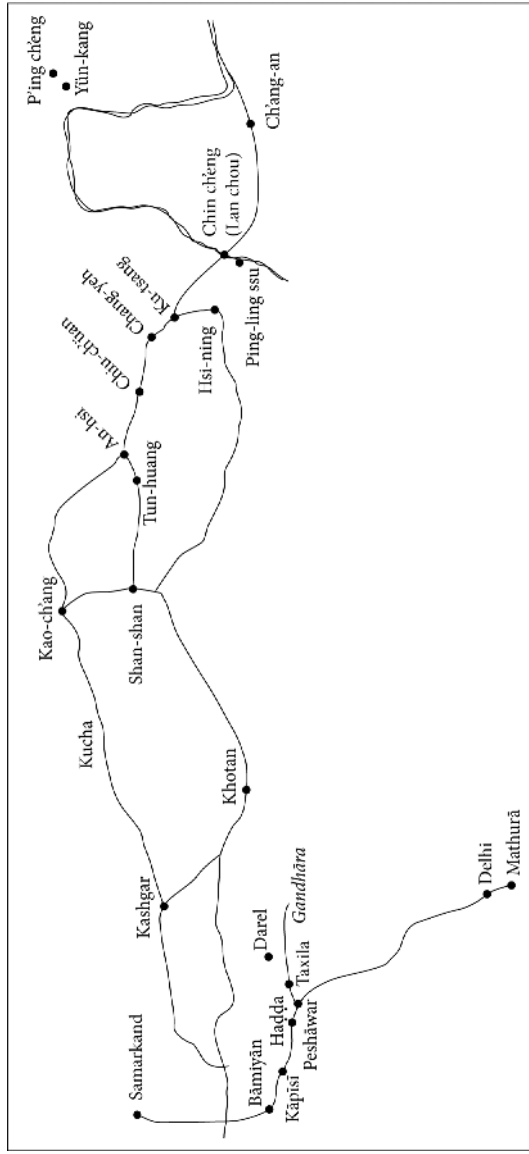


Fig. 8.49 Map: from Gandhara to Yun-kang



Fig. 8.50a View of the T'an-yao caves in the cliff at Yun-kang, near Ta-t'ung, Shansi province, China

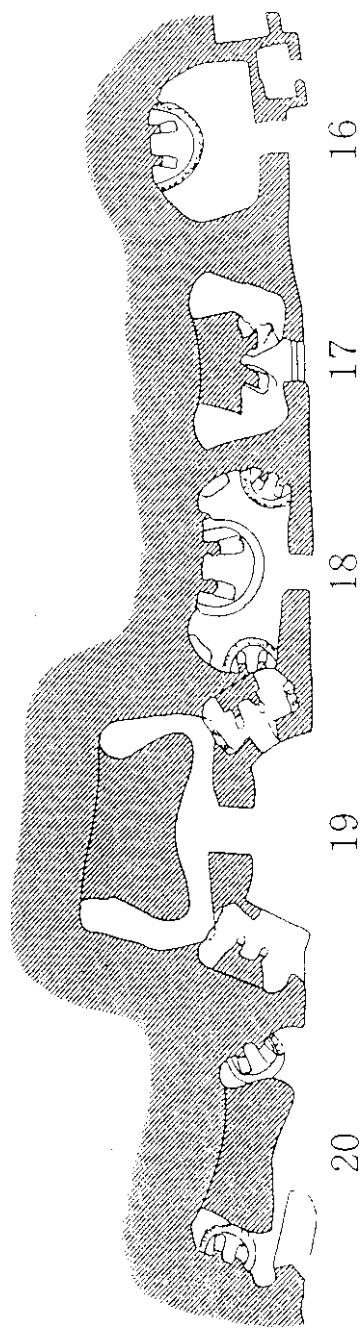


Fig. 8.50b Ground plan of the five T'an-yao caves, Yün-kang

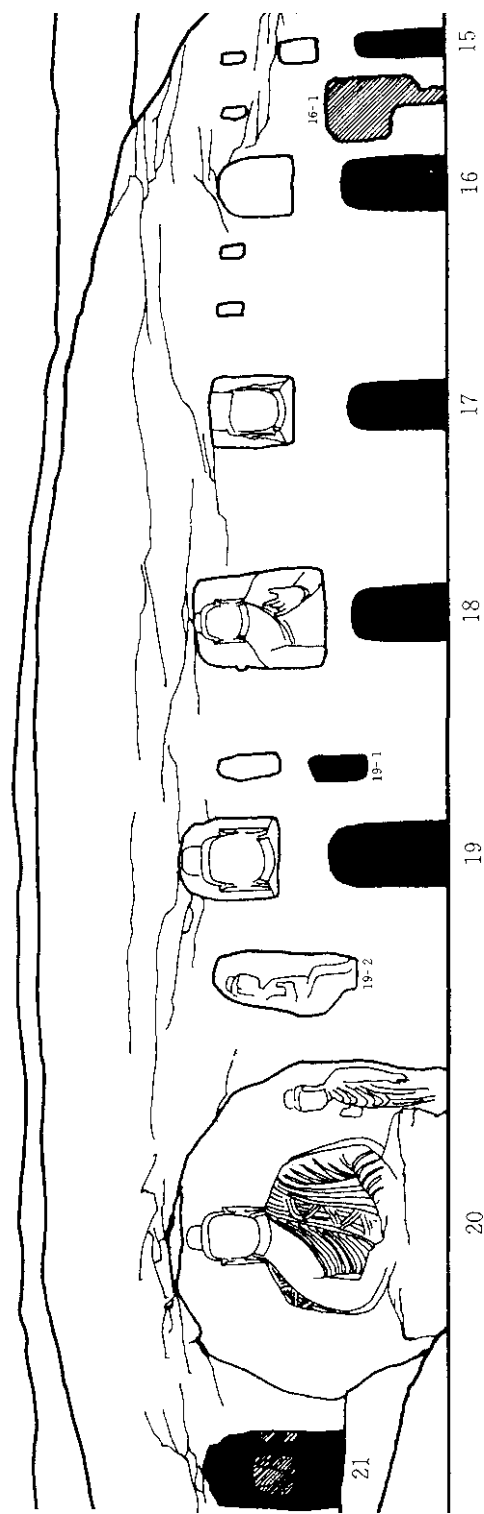


Fig. 8.50c Elevation of the five T'an-yao caves (Caves 16-20), Yün-kang





Fig. 8.51 Colossal Buddha of Cave 16, Yün-kang, Northern Wei, 460's-480's A.D. (1987)



Fig. 8.52a Colossal cross-ankled Bodhisattva, Cave 17, Yün-kang, Northern Wei, 460's-470's A.D. (1982)



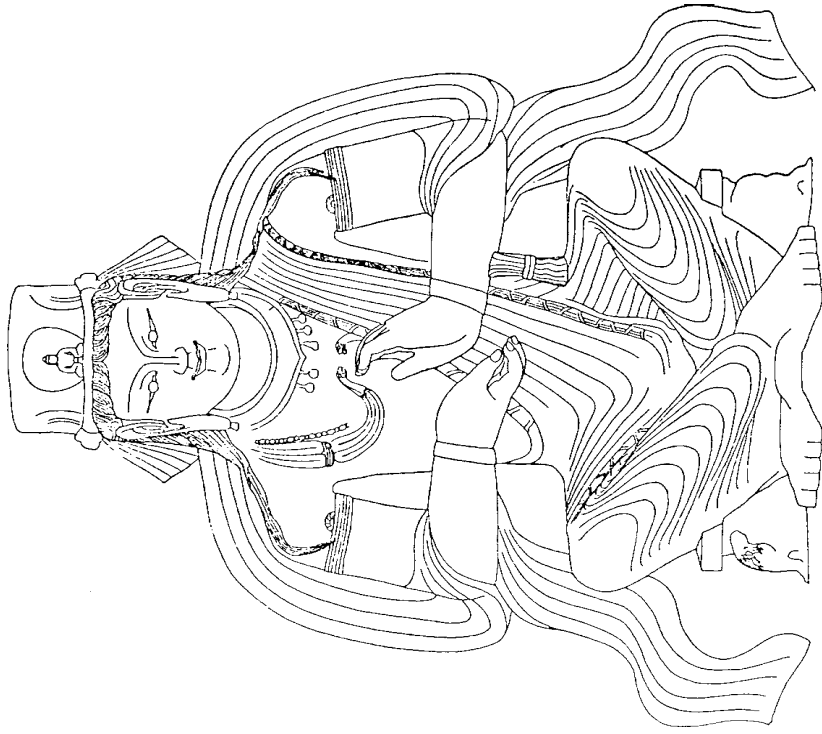


Fig. 8.52b Conjectural drawing of cross-ankled Bodhisattva in Fig. 8.52a



Fig. 8.53a Colossal standing Buddha, Cave 18, Yün-kang, Northern Wei, 460's-470's A.D. (1982)



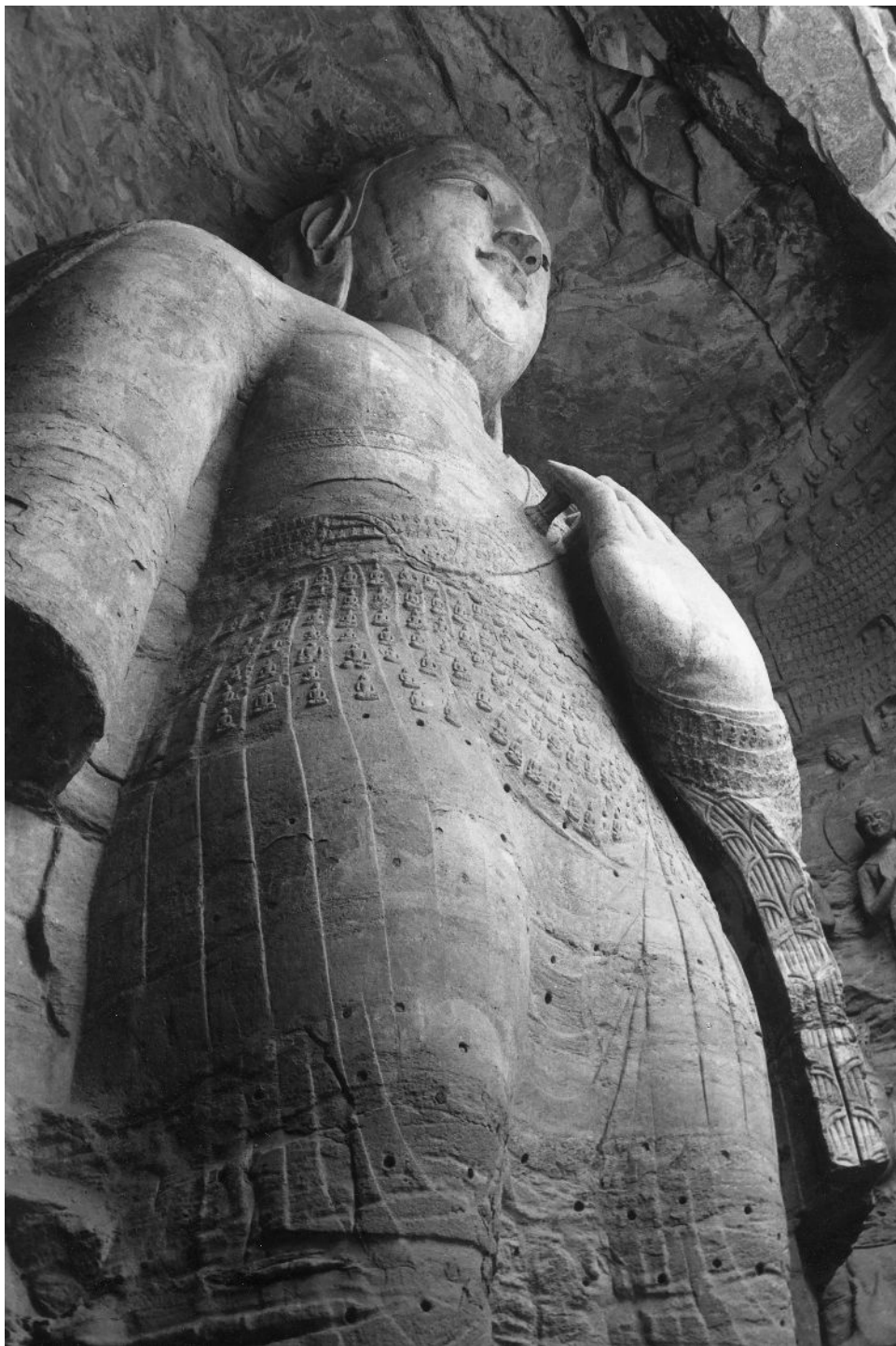


Fig. 8.53b Detail Fig. 8.53a colossal Buddha in Cave 18 (1982)

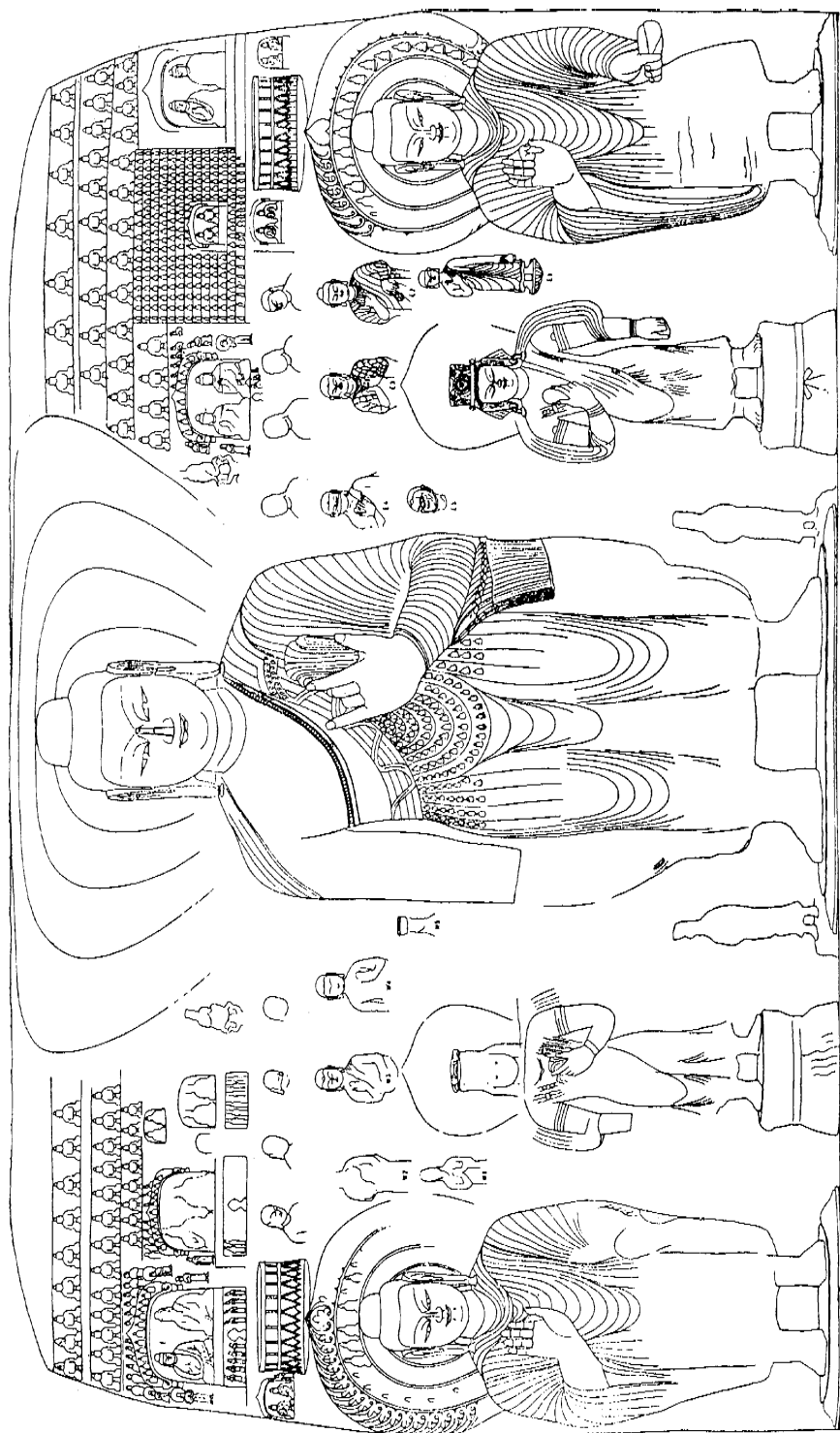


Fig. 8.53c Drawing of the images of Cave 18 (north wall in the center, east and west walls to right and left), Yün-kang





Fig. 8.54 Colossal seated Buddha, Cave 19, Yün-kang, ca. 460's-470's A.D. (1982)





Fig. 8.55 Colossal seated Buddha and attendant standing Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, Cave 20, Yün-kang, ca. 460's-470's A.D. (1987)



Fig. 8.56 Sketch of a panel of a cross-ankled Maitreya Bodhisattva, two attendants and four surrounding images, fragment of a stone stupa, Wu Wei (Ku-tsang), Kansu, Northern Liang, ca. 430's A.D.

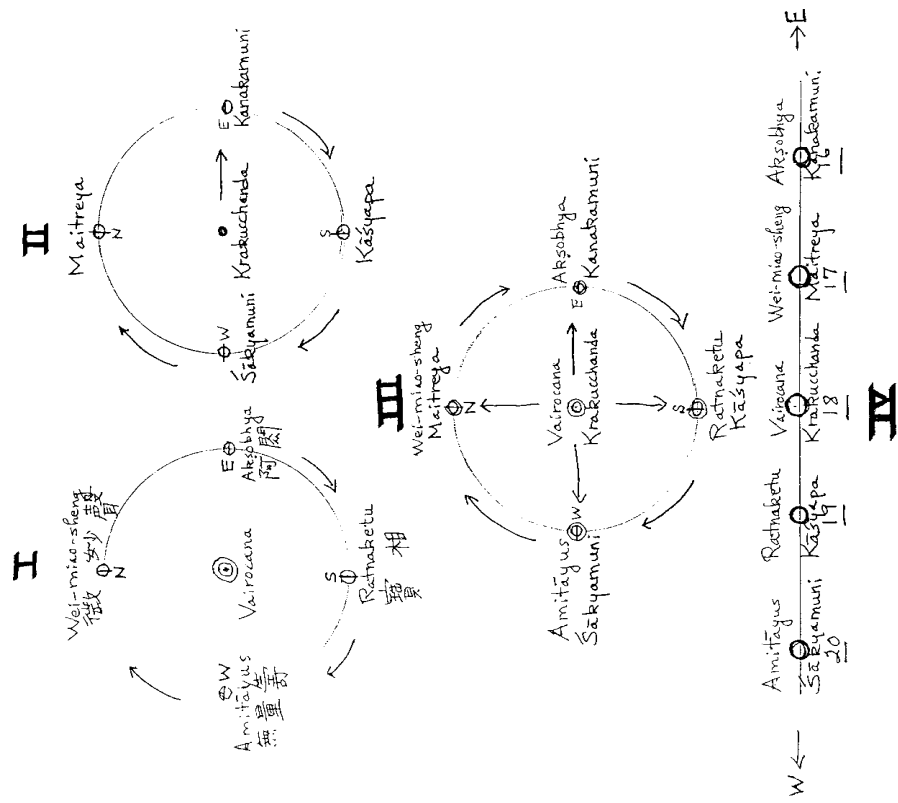


Fig. 8.57 Diagrams explicating the theory of the iconography of the main colossal images of the five T'an-yao caves, Yün-kang

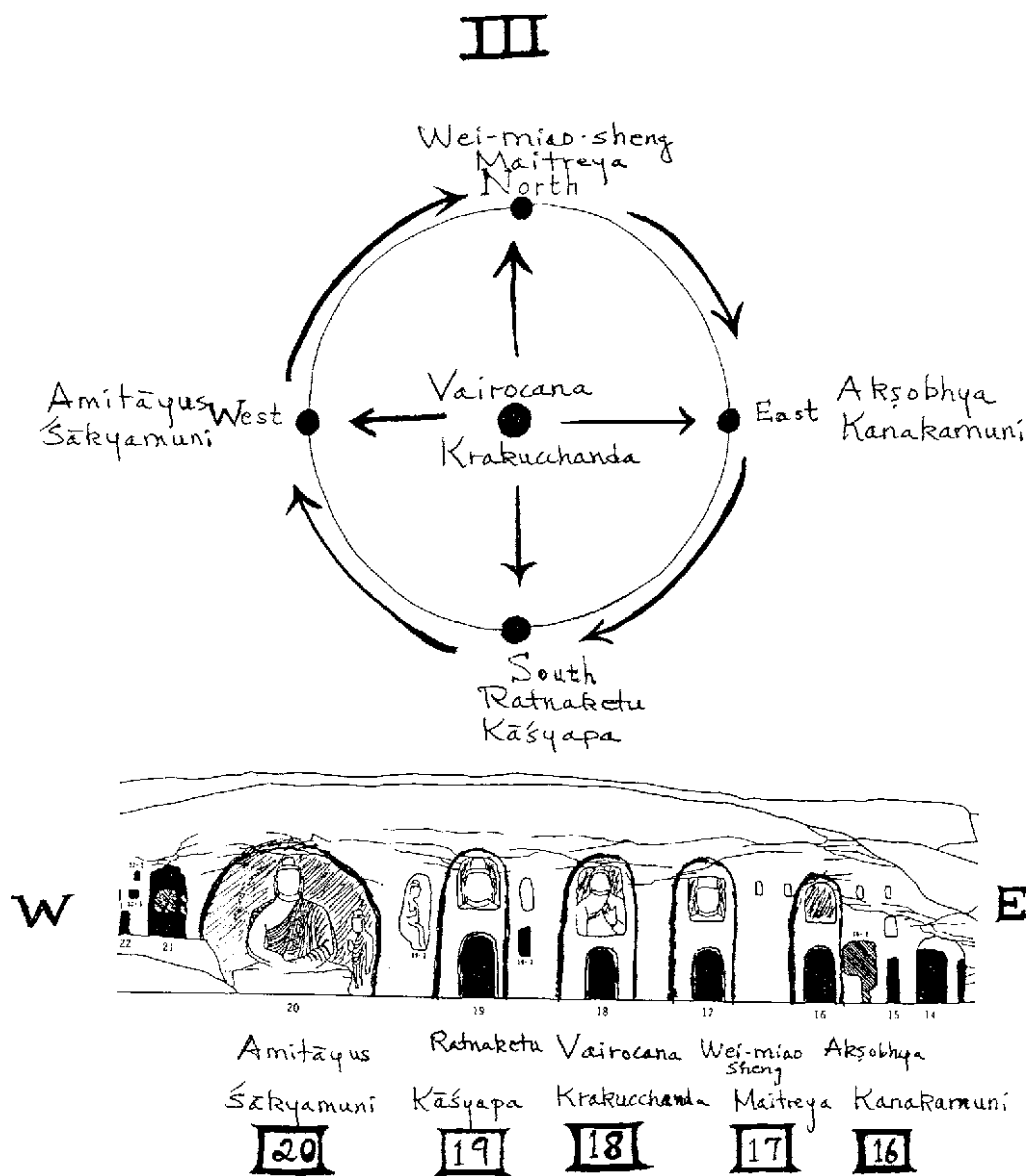


Fig. 8.58 Diagram and elevation showing the summary conclusions of the iconography of the five T'an-yao caves, Yün-kang



Fig. 9.1 View of Mai-chi shan hill, on approaching from T'ien-shui, Kansu province



Fig. 9.2a East cliff, Mai-chi shan, Kansu



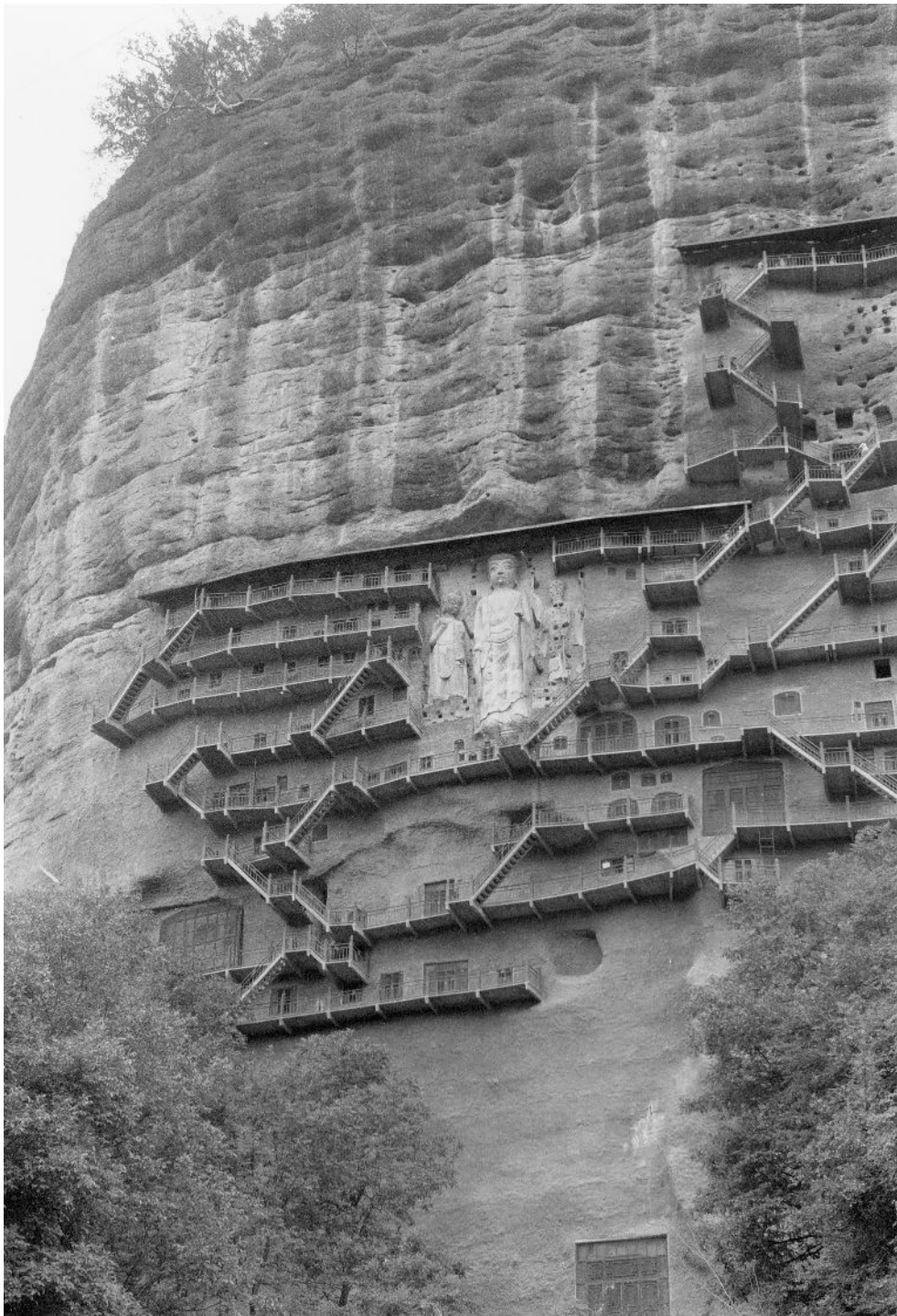


Fig. 9.2b Detail of the west cliff, Mai-chi shan, Kansu (1992)

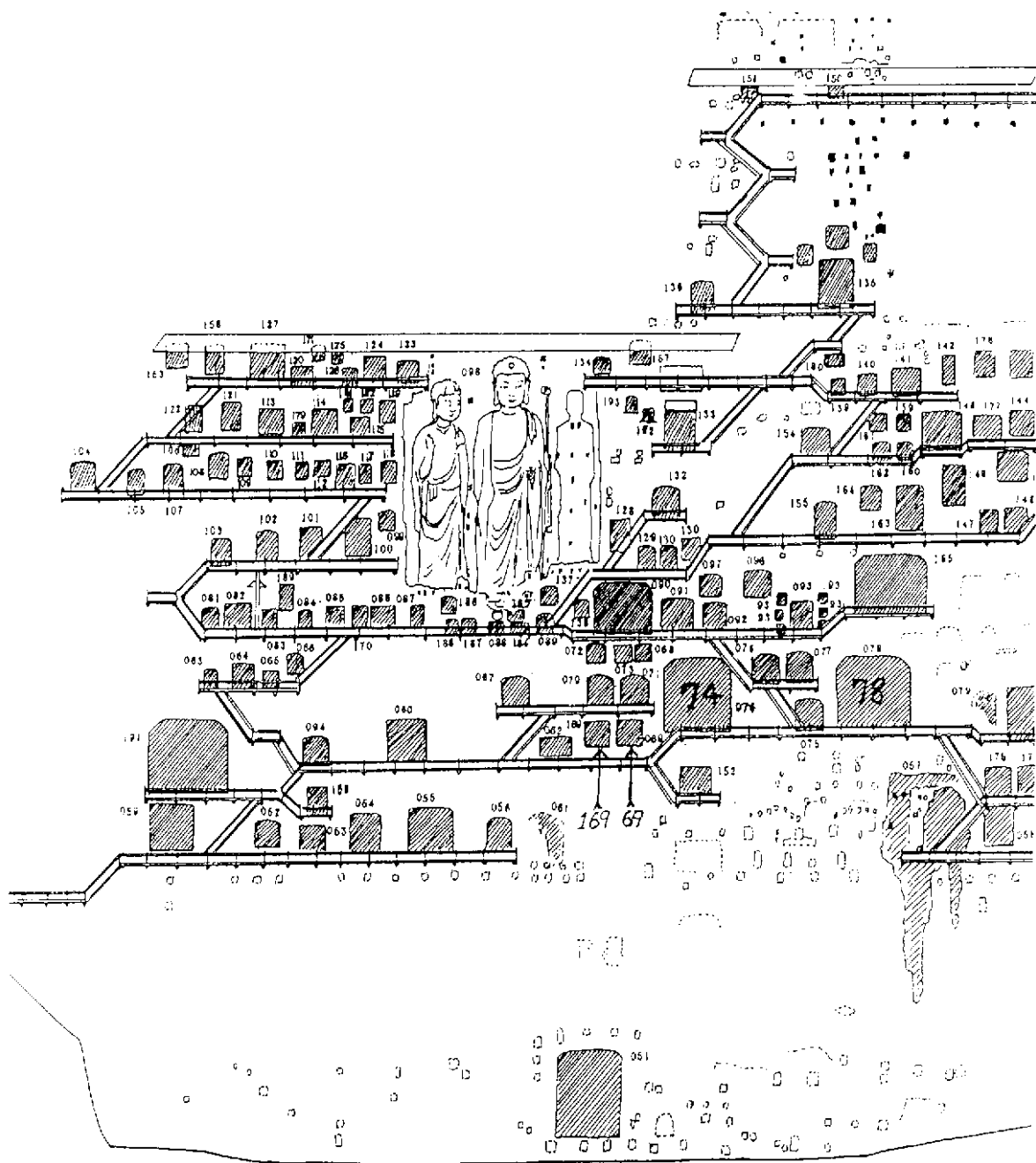


Fig. 9.3a Drawing of numbered caves on the west cliff, Mai-chi shan

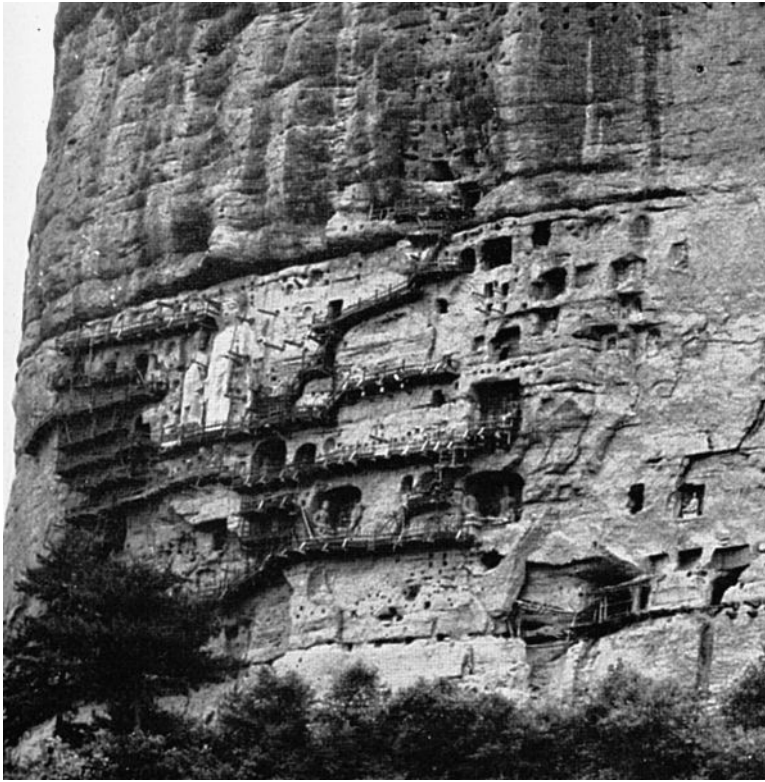


Fig. 9.3b View of the west cliff showing Caves 74 and 78 prior to being covered by doors, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.4 Main Buddha (back wall) and left (west) wall dhyānāsana Buddha, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan, painted clay



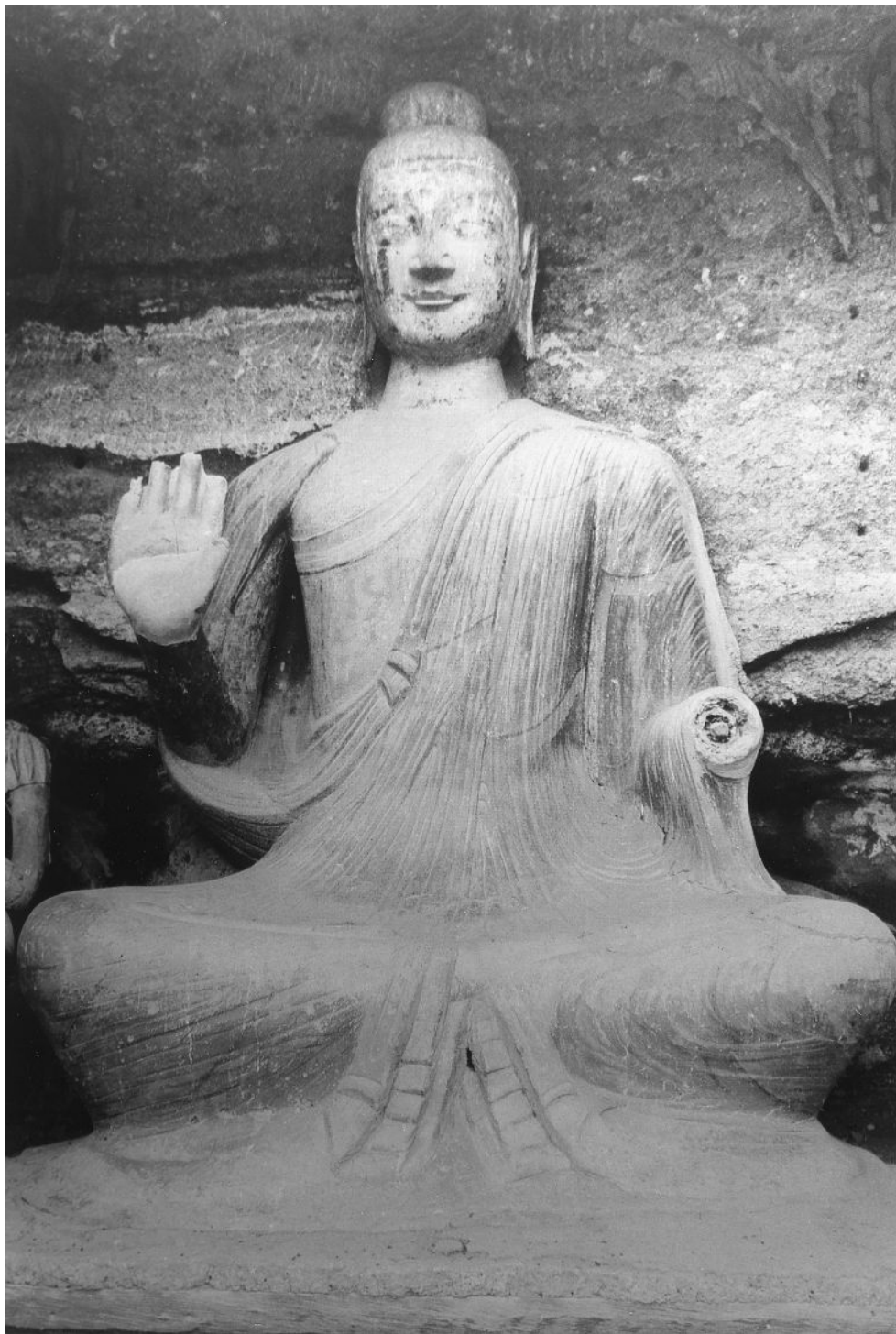


Fig. 9.5a Main Buddha (back wall), Cave 78, Mai-chi shan, painted clay





Fig. 9.5b Main Buddha (before restoration of right arm), Cave 78, Mai-chi shan

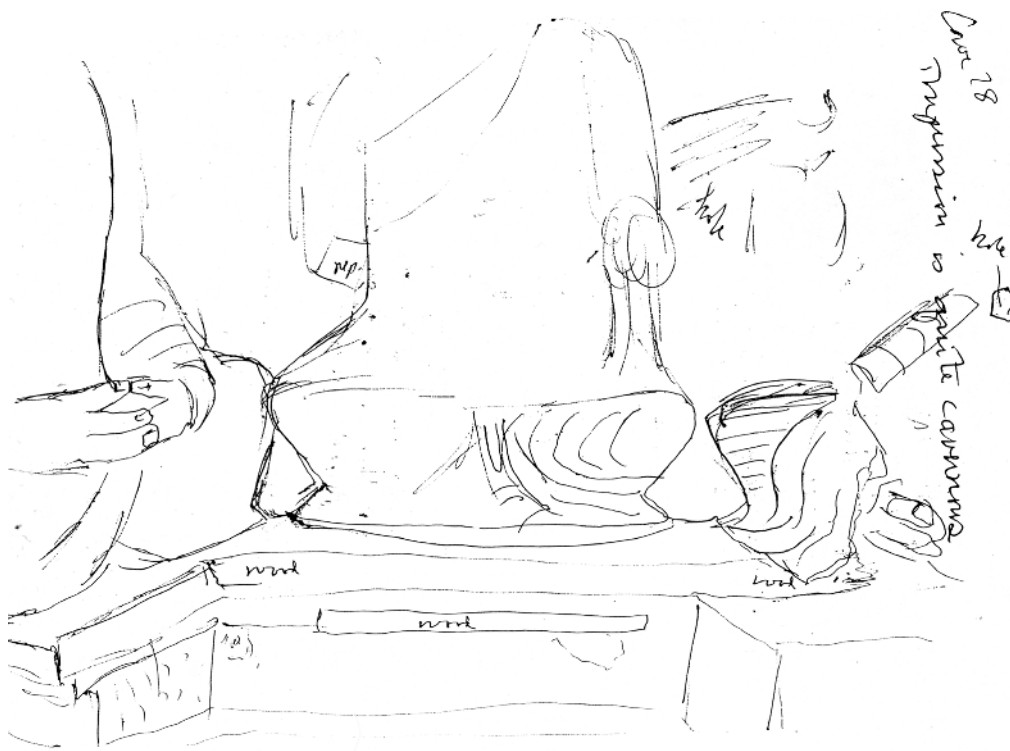


Fig. 9.6a *In-situ* sketch of the three large Buddhas of Cave 78, showing pedestal platform and right wall ruined Buddha, Mai-chi shan

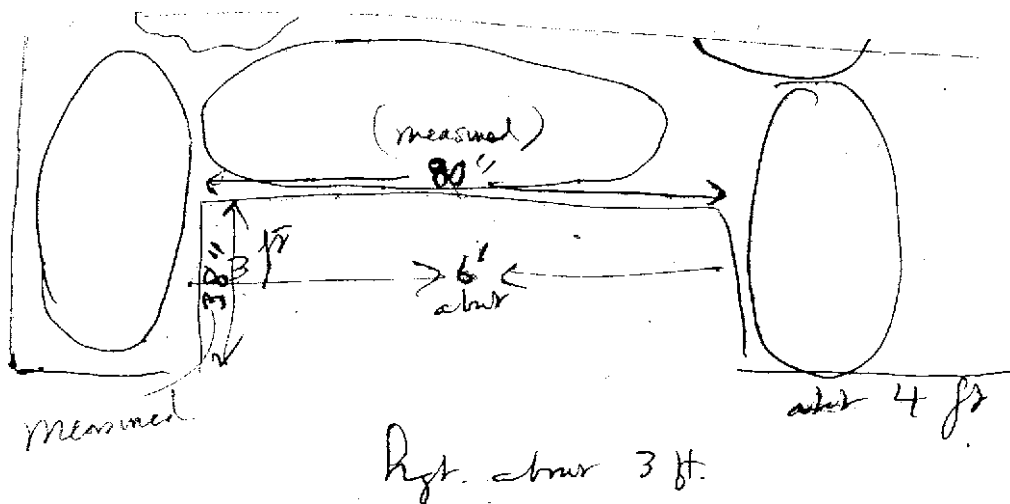


Fig. 9.6b *In situ* drawing of image placement and measurement of pedestal platform, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.7 Left (west) wall large dhyānāsana Buddha, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan

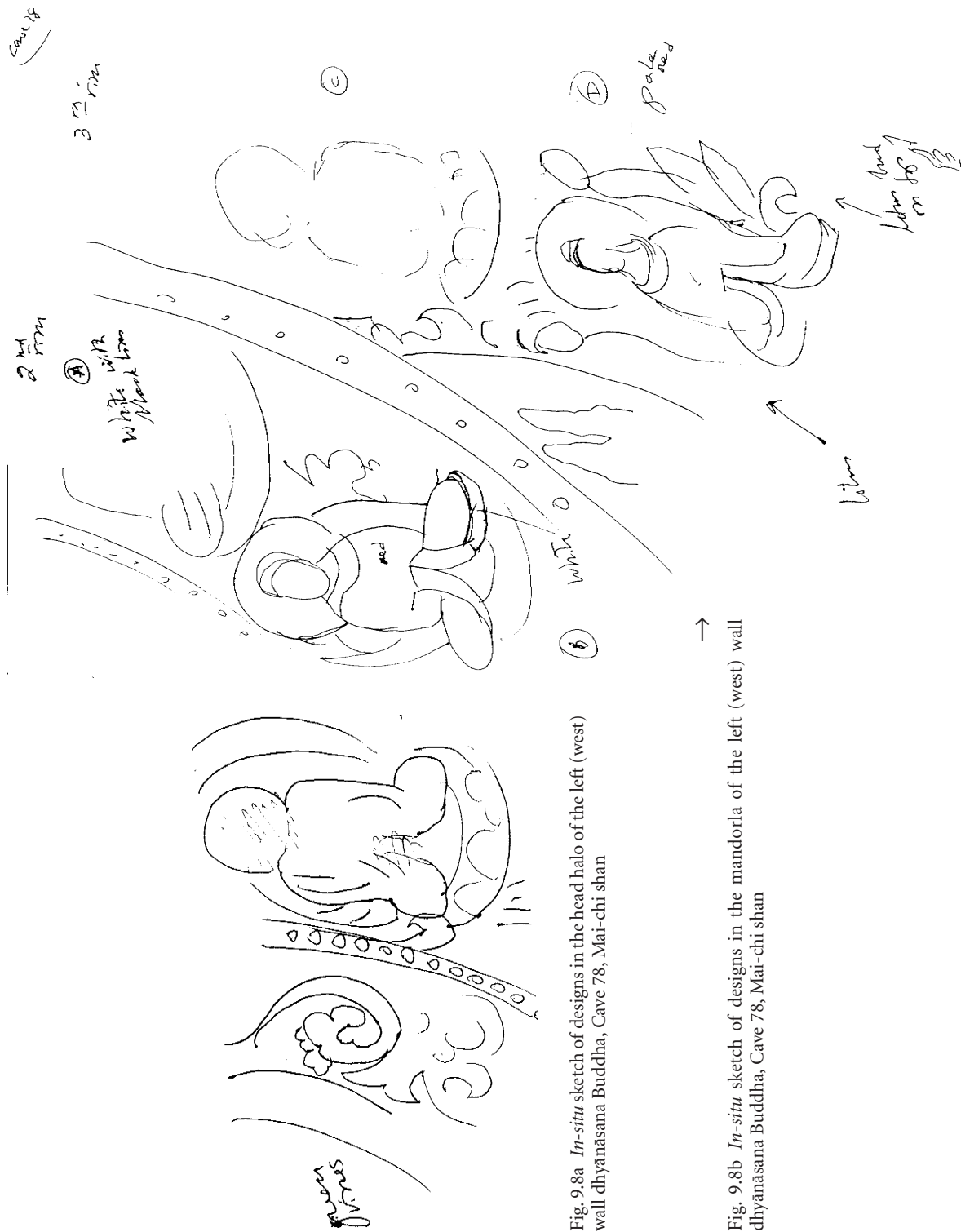


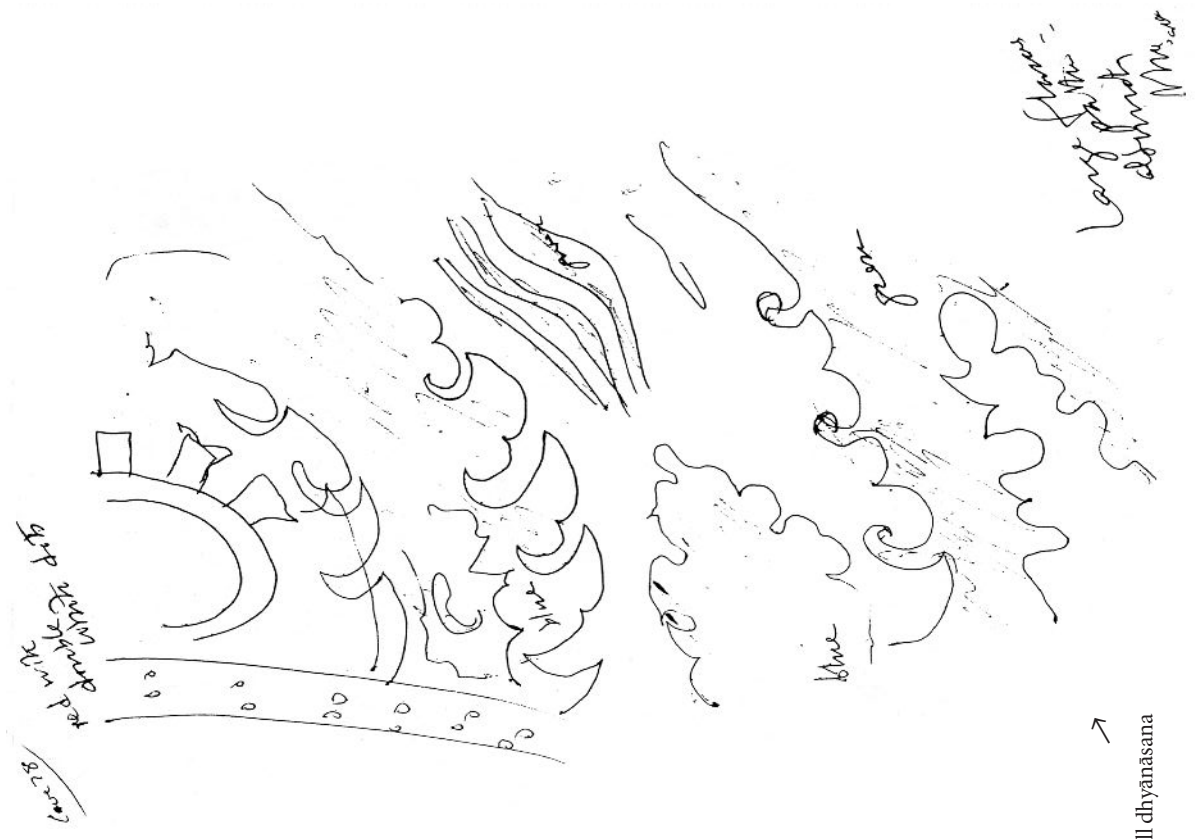
Fig. 9.8a *In-situ* sketch of designs in the head halo of the left (west) wall dhyānāsana Buddha, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan

→  
Fig. 9.8b *In-situ* sketch of designs in the mandorla of the left (west) wall dhyānāsana Buddha, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.8c *In-situ* sketch detail of a seated Buddha on lotus pedestal in mandorla of the left (west) wall dhyānasana Buddha, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan



→

Fig. 9.8d *In situ* sketch of cloud designs in mandorla of the left (west) wall dhyānasana Buddha, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan

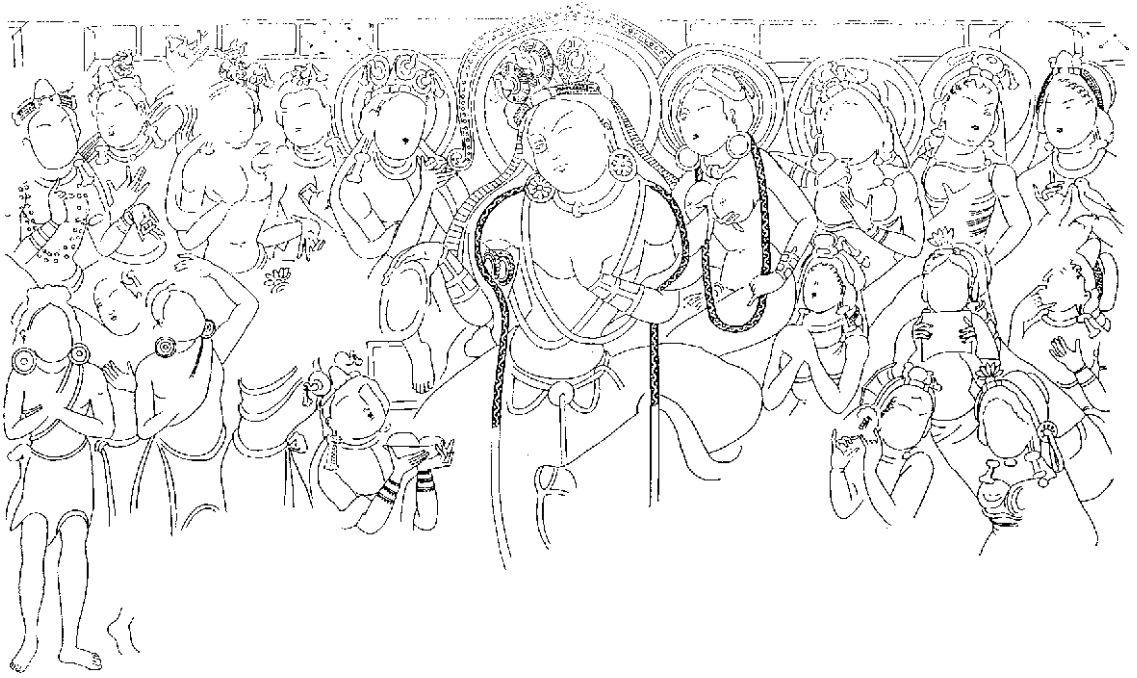


Fig. 9.9 Grünwedel's drawing of the main panel, main wall, main chamber, Cave 118, Kizil, Kucha



Fig. 9.10a Painting of donors on the pedestal platform of the left (west) wall, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.10b Donor (top row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left end) from the painting in Fig. 9.10a



Fig. 9.10c Donor (top row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right [front] end) from the painting in Fig. 9.10a





Fig. 9.10d *In-situ* sketch of the heads of two monks, remnants of painting on the central part of the pedestal platform (seen in the far upper right corner of Fig. 9.10a), Cave 78, Mai-chi shan

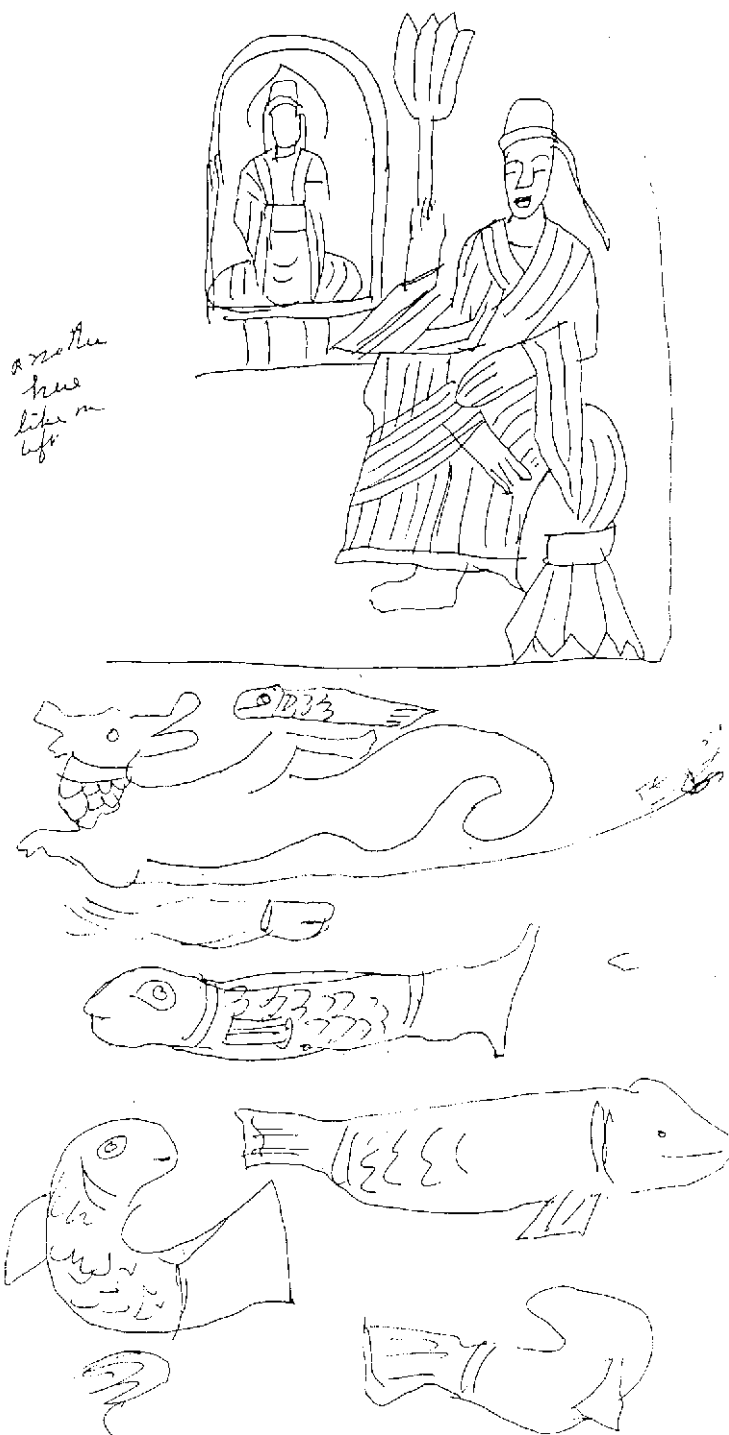


Fig. 9.10e Sketch of images on the back side of a relief stele, sandstone, dated Northern Wei (411 A.D.), Sian Municipal Cultural Relics Association, Sian





Fig. 9.11 Remains of standing attendant Bodhisattva (main Buddha's left), Cave 78, Mai-chi shan, clay

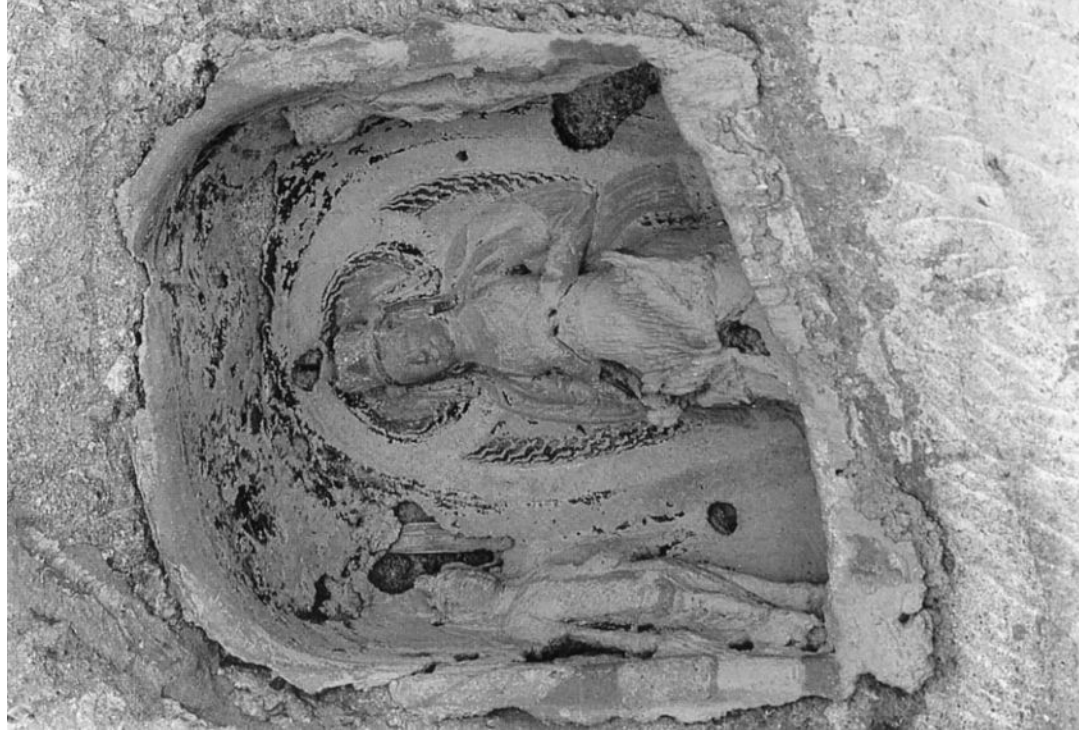


Fig. 9.12a Niche with cross-ankled Bodhisattva and two attendants, upper left, main wall, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.12b Niche with contemplative Bodhisattva, upper right, main wall, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.13 Main Buddha (head Ch'ing repair) and attendants, back wall, Cave 74, Mai-chi shan, Kansu



Fig. 9.14 Dhyānāsana Buddha, left (west) wall, and right attendant Bodhisattva of the main (back) wall, Cave 74, Mai-chi shan



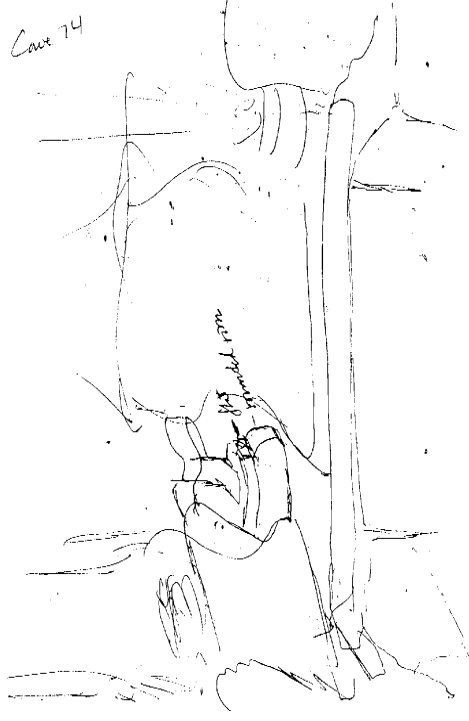


Fig. 9.15b *In-situ* sketch of lower part and pedestal of the right attendant Bodhisattva, main (back) wall, Cave 74, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.15a Detail of right attendant standing Bodhisattva, main (back) wall, Cave 74, Mai-chi shan

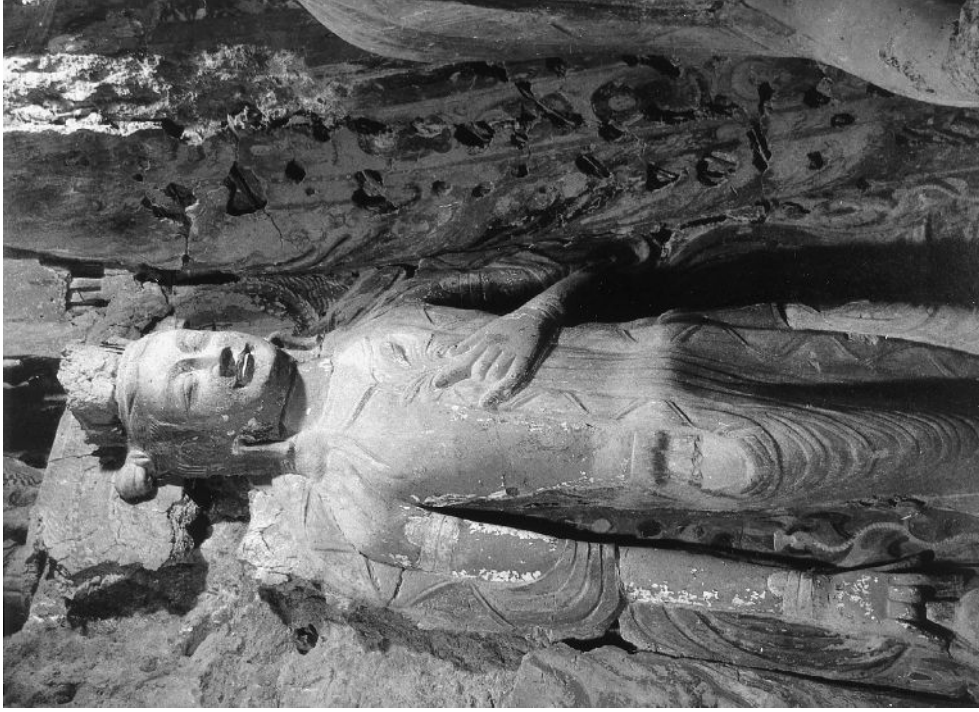


Fig. 9.16a Standing left attendant Bodhisattva, main (back) wall, Cave 74, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.16b Detail of the left attendant Bodhisattva, main (back) wall, Cave 74, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.16c Rubbing of dhyānasana Buddha niche on the side of the Wei Wen-lang stele, dated 424 A.D., Yao hsien Yao-wang shan Museum, Shensi



Fig. 9.16d Detail of standing Bodhisattva (probably Kuan-shih-yin), gilt bronze, ca. early 5<sup>th</sup> century, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco



Fig. 9.17a Small niche with cross-ankled Bodhisattva and two attendants, main (back) wall, upper left, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.17b Small niche with contemplative Bodhisattva and two attendants, main (back) wall, upper right, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.18a Contemplative Bodhisattva and left attendant, small niche, main (back) wall, upper right, Mai-chi shan

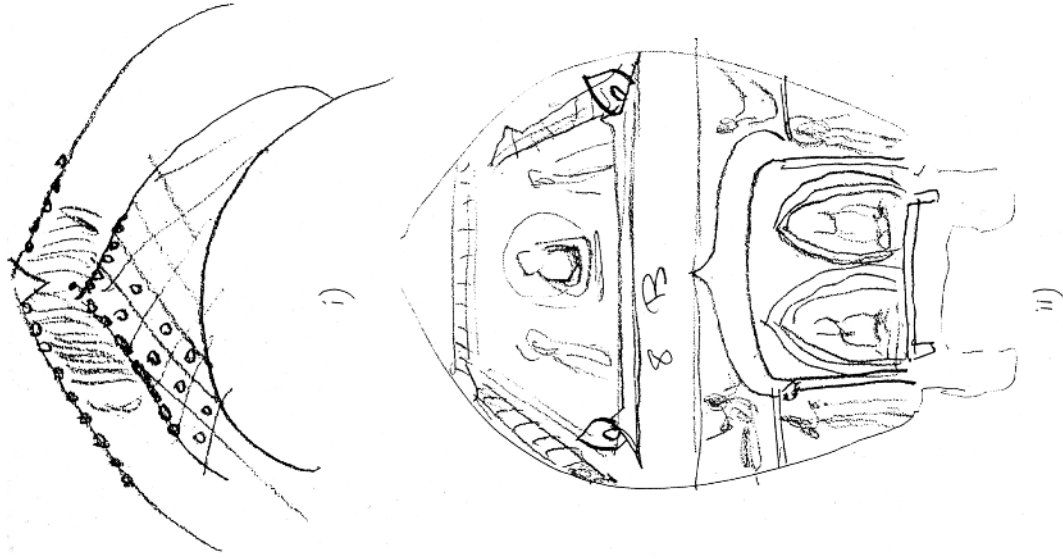


Fig. 9.18b Drawings of small bronze relief with 4-legged stand: i) top of mandorla (obverse); ii) reverse side, early 5<sup>th</sup> century, Sian Municipal Cultural Relics Association, Sian



Fig. 9.18c Back of bronze relief showing niche with Śakyamuni and Prabhūtaratna from the *Lotus Sūtra*, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 9.18d Detail of contemplative Bodhisattva (probably Siddhārtha), from the miniature stone stupa of Pai, dated 434 A.D., Northern Liang dynasty, from Chiu-ch'üan, Kansu





Fig. 9.19 Detail of the head of the main Buddha, rear wall, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.20 Detail of the head of the standing Buddha of Niche No. 1, Ping-ling ssu, Kansu





Fig. 9.21 Side view of the main Buddha and dhyānasana Buddha of the left (west) wall, Cave 78, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.22b Detail of Fig. 9.22a

←

Fig. 9.22a Śākyamuni Buddha ("Udayana Buddha"), copy made in 985 in China by the Japanese monk Chōnen, now at the Seiryōji, Kyoto, candana wood



Fig. 9.23 Seated Buddha, stone, dated 466, Northern Wei, private collection, Japan



Fig. 9.24a Buddha in dhyana mudra, Gandhara, stone, British Museum, London



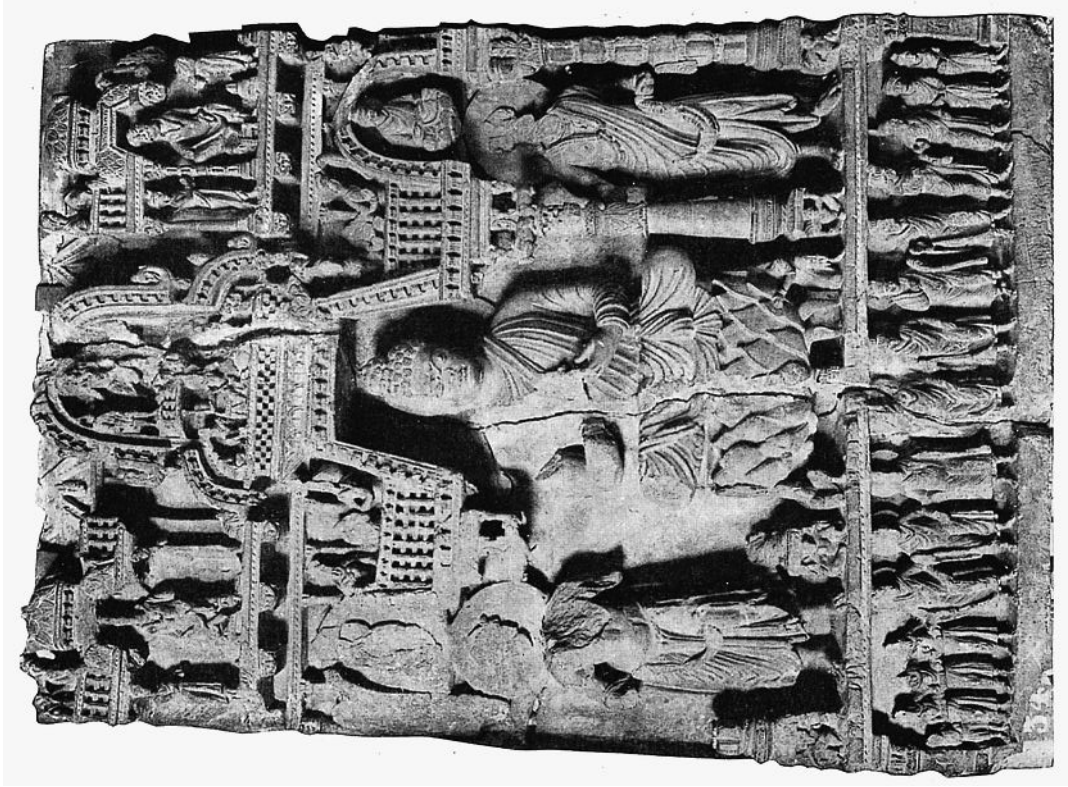


Fig. 9.24b Multi-image stele relief with Buddha in dharmachakra mudra, from Mohammad Nāri, Peshāwar area, Gandhāra, stone, Lahore Museum



Fig. 9.24c Stele relief with Buddha in dharmachakra mudra, from Loriyān Tāngai, Peshāwar area, Gandhāra, stone, now Indian Museum, Calcutta





Fig. 9.24d Relief with contemplative Bodhisattva holding a lotus, from Nimogram, Swāt, stone, now in the Museum, Saidu Sharif



Fig. 9.24e Contemplative Bodhisattva holding a lotus, from Chakdara, Swāt, stone

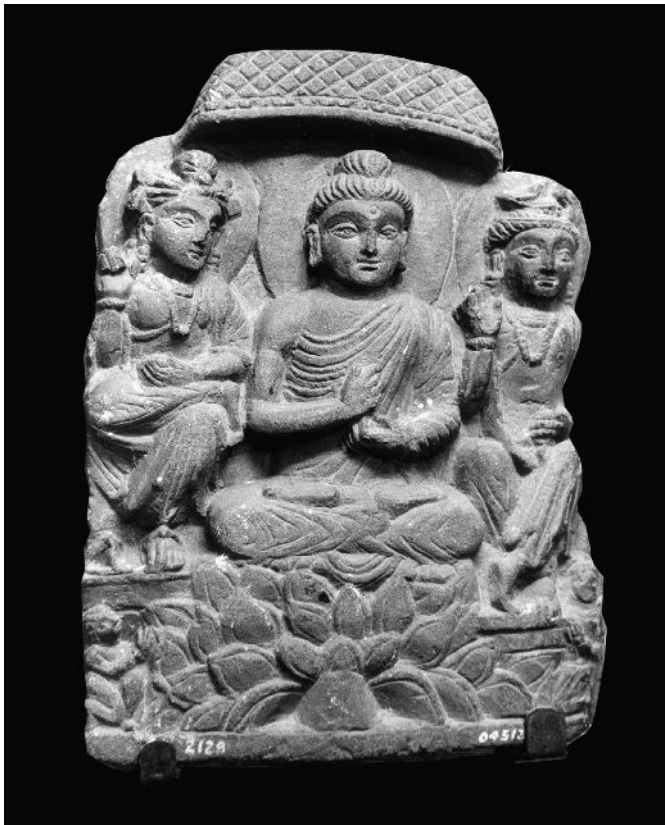


Fig. 9.24f Small triad of Buddha in dharmachakra mudra attended by contemplative Bodhisattva and cross-ankled Bodhisattva, Gandhara, Peshawar Museum

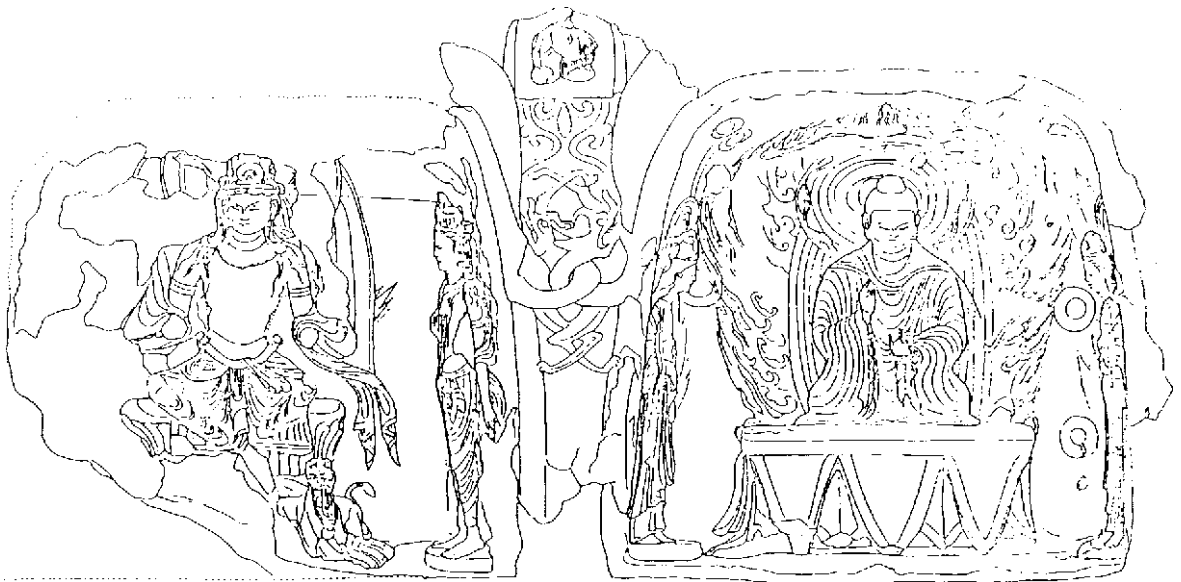


Fig. 9.25 Drawing of niches 169 (left) and 69 (right), west cliff, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.26 Cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya), main (back) wall, and left attendant Bodhisattva, Cave 169, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.27a Cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya), main (back) wall, Cave 169, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.27b Detail of head of Cross-ankled Bodhisattva, Cave 169, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.28a Cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya) with stem pedestal, bronze

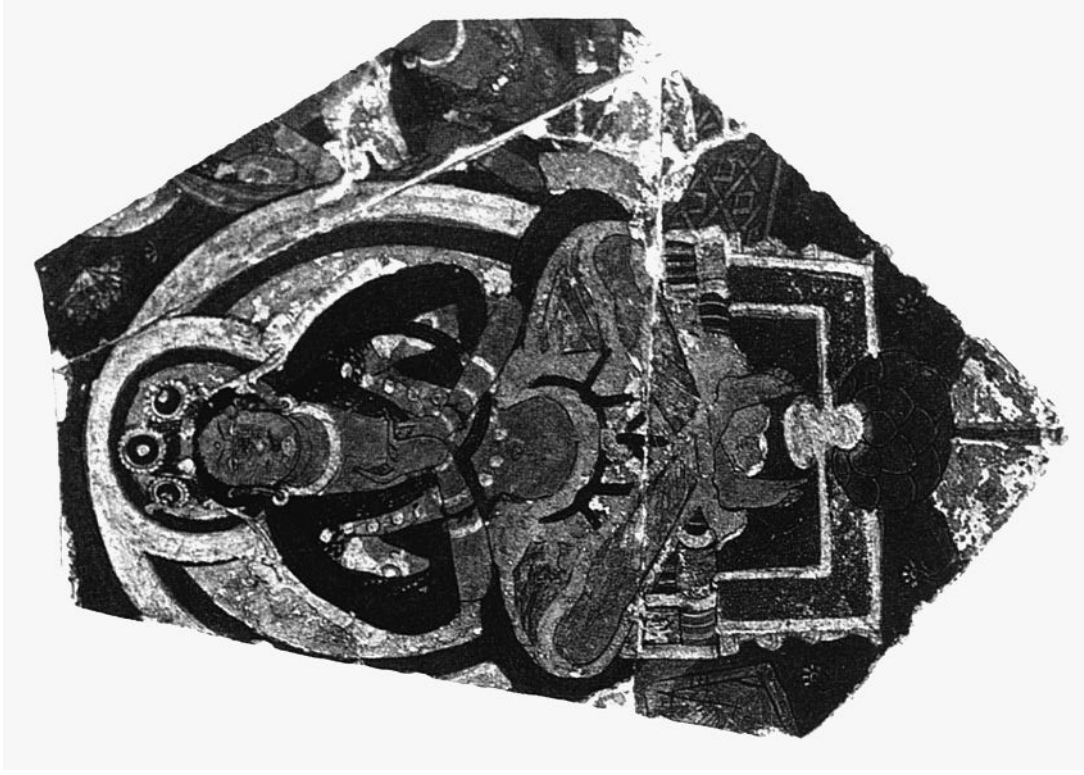


Fig. 9.28b Cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya), Cave 76 (Peacock Cave), Kizil, Kucha, wall painting, ca. 400, now in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin



Fig. 9.28c Cross-ankled Bodhisattva (Maitreya) in Tuṣita Heaven, fragment of stone stele relief, from Nimogram, Swāt, Pakistan, now in the Museum, Saidu Sharif



Fig. 9.29a Left attendant standing Bodhisattva, Cave 169, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.29b Detail of left attendant standing Bodhisattva, Cave 169, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.30 Intertwined dragons between the arched niches of Cave 169 and 69, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.31a Cave 69, Mai-chi shan





Fig. 9.31b Buddha of Cave 69, Mai-chi shan



Fig. 9.32 Seated Buddha in dhyana mudra, gilt bronze with traces of polychrome, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri